LINES IN THE SAND: DECONSTRUCTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INDO-PAKISTANI BORDER

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ABSTRACT

India and Pakistan are locked in a battle in which neither will compromise. Their differences, they believe, are ultimately based in their religious identities and their experiences during the Partition in which they were created.

This thesis posits that, contrary to the Indian and Pakistani nationalist historiographies, religion was not the primary factor in the formation of the Indo-Pakistani border. Instead, the roles of nationalism and the contemporary political climate as factors in the border’s creation will be examined.

The prevailing nationalist historiographies dictate that religion is the cause of the Indo-Pakistani border, that it determined its shape and the reasons for its creation. Instead, I argue that whilst religion determined the border’s formation (as, without a religio-nationalist ideology, Pakistan could not have been created), it did not determine its form. The shape of the border was, instead, the result of numerous other factors, including the changing nature of nationalism, the short timeline in which it could be created, and the friendships between members of the British administration and the Congress Party.

In the first section, I analyze the role played by religion both in the border and in much of the nationalist corpus. Using primary sources, I compare and contrast the prevailing histories with what Indians and Britons were saying, in public and in private, at the time.

The second section looks at nationalism as a determinant of the border’s shape. I use primary sources in a similar way to the first section, and examine the changing rhetoric and role of nationalism as the demands for Pakistan and Indian independence changed.

The third and final section places the creation of the border within its political context. Nationalist histories ignore much of the role played by Britain, yet the pressures faced by the British administration influenced the border due to time constraints and the need to portray the Empire’s decolonization as orderly and civilized in order to appease the United States.

As this thesis refutes the prevailing historical interpretations of the formation of the Indo-Pakistani border, it provides a new analysis of the end of the Raj and the beginnings of two independent nations. The border’s formation is ignored in most of the current historical analysis, with historians preferring to focus on the narratives of those crossing the border, rather than how the border was formed.
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I. Introduction

“There is only one thing which prevents India governing herself. That is the lack of agreement between Moslems and Hindus.”¹ Earl Winterton’s opinion, as voiced during a House of Commons debate on Indian independence, proved to be true during the partitioning of British India in 1947 into India and Pakistan.² As the Punjab and Bengal Boundary Commissions, led by Sir Cyril Radcliffe, drew the lines that would create the Dominions of Pakistan and India as tangible, physical nations, rather than just ideological constructs, India’s Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fled to their chosen sides of the divide, enacting a self-segregation that was little imagined when the new countries were first proposed.

The British government and imperial administration, All-India Congress Party, and the All-India Muslim League engineered the division of British India into India and Pakistan. Congress, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, positioned itself as the secular future of a country often bitterly divided by religious differences and British imperial policies. Having existed since 1885, it had led Indians through many campaigns, from the fight for political rights under British rule, to home rule while remaining a colony, to total independence for the new nation of India. The Muslim League, in comparison, was little more than an upstart organisation which, although founded in 1906, played almost no role in politics until 1940. Its foundation heralded the advent of popular and national Muslim politics, aiming to collate the diverse opinions of Indian Muslims into a single organisation and ideology. As stated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, the League's goal was to provide India's Muslim population with an autonomous nation in which they could be free from Hindu and British domination.³ The

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² “Pakistan” refers to Punjab, Afghanistan (the North-West Frontier Province), Kashmir, Sindh, and Baluchistan, and means “Land of the Pure” in Urdu.

imperial structure positioned the British administration as neutral and paternal administrators holding the best interests of India and Indians at heart. In fact, the design and implementation of British policies drove Congress and the League further apart, and resulted in the demand for Pakistan.

For the British, borders separated warring tribes, divided Muslims and non-Muslims, and kept other empires at bay. Borders were fought over and for, with the victors laying claim to the land beyond them. Having already divided India into administrative units, and then having subdivided some of these units along ostensibly religious lines, the British understood the power of a border in encouraging or quietening dissent, and in the importance that could be attached to what often amounted to little more than a line on a map. Borders, whether between districts, provinces or nations, proved controversial throughout Britain's period of rule, sometimes resulting in wars or diplomatic conflicts. In the creation of India and Pakistan from Britain, the border was problematic, as the cause of its creation and the path it would follow responded to the evolution of the League and Congress' ideologies.

In the debate over Pakistan's existence, the British maintained the administrative role, despite the creation of Pakistan necessitating the end of the British Empire on the Indian subcontinent. The British provided the architects for their empire's destruction in the form of Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Lord Louis Mountbatten, and the Boundary Commissions that would draw the borders to divide India from Pakistan. The reconstruction of British India into its new constituent parts of India and Pakistan, therefore, was decided by a select cabal of four – Mountbatten, Radcliffe, Nehru and Jinnah – although other politicians, such as the League's Liaqat Ali Khan, Congress' VP Menon, Commander-in-Chief Sir Claude Auchinleck, and the Governor of Punjab Sir Evan Jenkins, all played influential roles in the border's construction.

Due to the League's imagining of Pakistan as a safe-haven for India's Muslims, all

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4 While Menon was Mountbatten's political advisor, he was also a staunchly partisan member of Congress.
plans for Pakistan necessarily limited it to areas within Colonial India that had large Muslim populations or held particular significance in Indian Islam, such as the tombs of revered Shia or Sufi saints. The Lahore Resolution demanded that Pakistan be created from the Muslim-majority North-Western provinces, but other plans for Pakistan stretched as far as Delhi or included Muslim-majority Bengal and Assam. Although the League rejected most of these plans, they included Assam's Sylhet district and Bengal within the eventual demand for Pakistan, despite over a thousand miles of Indian territory existing between the West and East Pakistan borders. The Muslim League took the decision to site Pakistan in the North-West and North-East of India, and in doing so drew the debate over Pakistan's existence along religious lines, as these areas held large Muslim majorities, but also contained significant numbers of non-Muslims.

The process of Partition was quick and messy. Although the British government had planned for an eighteen-month period after their announcement in February 1947 that they were willing to cede power in India to one or more states, Britain's exit from India was soon brought forward to August 1947, fewer than six months away. Practicalities, such as the division of the armed forces and the equitable distribution of assets, were hurriedly undertaken by British administrators, even before the creation of the Boundary Commissions or the appointment of Radcliffe to lead them. Mountbatten, who was new to the job having succeeded the previous Viceroy, Viscount Archibald Wavell, ten days prior to the announcement of Indian independence, did not immediately appoint Radcliffe to head the Commissions, and Radcliffe did not reach India until the beginning of July. As a result, Radcliffe had less than six weeks to complete the task of drawing the boundaries between

India and Pakistan, settling disputes, and making the Indian public aware of on which side of the border they now resided. In the meantime, the subcontinent was tearing itself apart as League and Congress supporters fought and died for the inclusion of areas within India or Pakistan.

The significance of Partition and the creation of the Indo-Pakistani border resulted in a corpus of literature that sought to reflect both the Indian and Pakistani nationalist perspectives. The Indian, Pakistani and British historiographical approaches\(^7\) to the division of British India and the construction of the border differ starkly, and informed and are informed by popular and academic understandings of the Radcliffe Line. Given its impact on regional and international geo-politics, the construction of the Indo-Pakistani border has remained a contentious issue in India, Pakistan and Britain since 1947. Pakistani historiography, lurching between lauding Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s central role in the border’s construction and condemning the British and Congress for colluding in disadvantaging Pakistan’s future prospects, tends to alternately avow and disavow Muslim agency in the creation of the border. Likewise, Indian historiography figures the Congress Party as both the founder of independent India but powerless in the face of British and Muslim League machinations to weaken India through the award of territory to Pakistan. Historical writing produced in India and Pakistan tends to be fiercely nationalistic, the author positioning their nation in opposition to the neighbour across the border. The writing is also greatly influenced by current events: during times of war or national crisis, there is little criticism of the nation’s foundation, and during periods of Indo-Pakistani antagonism authors emphasise the religious divisions between the two nations. The texts produced by Indian and Pakistani authors directly influence contemporary constructions of the border, legitimising and reiterating the

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\(^7\) References to Pakistani, Indian or British historiography refers to texts produced by academics, writers or scholars whose significant background in these countries, whether as their homeland, employer or place of education, inflects their interpretation of national and international events. As some movements, such as the Subaltern Studies Group, cross national boundaries, an author’s allegiances will be explained when needed.
border as the product of religious divisions, ignoring the possibility of other causes. British historiography, meanwhile, attempts to position Indian independence as the natural end to two centuries of British imperialism, with the British administration acting as a parent to the unruly Congress and League. The legacy of such paternalism was that historical writing positioned the creation of Pakistan and independent India as inevitable, and as such the formation of the border remained a detail rather than a focus, preventing serious examination of the process of dividing British India.

Much of India’s nationalist corpus consists of authors involved in the Congress Party,Partition, or both. VP Menon produced the exhaustive *Transfer of Power in India*, which charts the independence movement from its explosive beginnings in the Indian Mutiny\(^8\) in 1857, until its end following Partition. Throughout *Transfer*, Menon depicts the British as incompetent, cruel and ignorant in the governance of India, whilst emphasising how opposition to the British unified the Indian population, leading to the call for independence. Menon’s approach to the Radcliffe award exemplifies his nationalist stance when he decries it for leaving India “only thirteen districts” in Punjab, and “only thirty-six per cent of the area” of Bengal.\(^9\) These statements ignore that the thirteen districts contained the vast majority of Punjab and Bengal’s industries, fertile agricultural land and non-Muslim population.

Similarly, Menon’s *Integration of the Indian States* depicts the local monarchies as melodramatic,\(^10\) arrogant,\(^11\) and venal,\(^12\) positioning the Congress Party as the voice of reason.

\(^8\) Menon and other nationalist authors reject the term “mutiny,” preferring instead “rebellion” or “revolution” to describe the uprising by Muslim and Hindu Indians against British and Anglo-Indian rule. VP Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), 3.

\(^9\) Menon, *Transfer*, 402-03.


\(^11\) Menon selectively quotes the Nawab of Bhopal’s letters to Mountbatten to depict the Nawab as churlish and self-important. Ibid, 84.

\(^12\) Menon details the ruler of Travancore’s appropriation of and refusal to return property belonging to Hindu temples.
Whereas Menon portrays Partition as the result of high politics, more recent Indian nationalist authors, such as Mushirul Hasan, use the violence of Partition to construct India's national narrative. Hasan is a prolific author, and in each of his works he uses accounts of the independence struggle, including of Partition's violence, to emphasise Indian unity. His works privilege accounts by Muslim members of the Congress Party in order to stress the divisiveness of Jinnah and the Muslim League and stress India's secularism in comparison to Pakistan's religiosity. Furthermore, he denies communalism a role in the construction of the border, although he uses survivors' testimonies to further his belief in modern India's secular nationalism.

The division of Pakistan between Punjab and Bengal resulted in a bifurcated historiography in which Bengalis (now Bangladeshis) and West Pakistanis analyse Partition only in relation to their geographical region. Pakistani academics tend to concentrate on specific topics such as the role played by Jinnah or the Two Nation Theory in Pakistan's creation, thereby constructing an elite history for Pakistan. Bangladeshi academics largely ignore Partition and instead focus on the struggle for the creation Bangladesh, resulting in a dearth of secondary resources on the construction of the Bengal border. Pakistani nationalism is evident in almost all works published in Pakistan, including the compendia of documents relating to Jinnah and Partition. Such nationalism can be seen in the absence of anti-Pakistan Indian Muslims such as Abul Kalam Azad from the government-approved collections of primary sources, and in the use of "Hindustan" to refer to India, thus contrasting the "Hindu"

and "Pure" nations.\textsuperscript{15} The Two Nation theory is prominent in Pakistani scholarship, and authors such as Iftikhar Malik construct Partition as the necessary product of Hindu-Muslim difference. As many published Pakistani academics reside outside of Pakistan, usually in the United Kingdom or United States, Western interpretations of Pakistani and Partition history inflect their works. Most Pakistani academics, even those who repudiate the constructed Pakistani national narrative, situate Partition within a chronology of Muslim difference, subconsciously reifying Pakistan's foundation in the League's Two Nation ideology.

Nationalist histories, which often privilege elite accounts of nation-building and top-down leadership, are repudiated by the Subaltern Studies Group (SSG). The SSG's adherents reconstruct the prevailing narratives through the use of non-elite sources to create a history in which the non-elites are the agents of social and political change. The dearth of subaltern sources on the construction of the border prevents authors from reading the border through the SSG's lens, but I will use letters between ordinary Indians and their rulers to demonstrate the changing nature of support for the ideas of Pakistan and an independent India.

The differences of the respective national approaches notwithstanding, there were certain commonalities, the most important of which was the role of religion. The role of religion in the border's construction remains a common thread linking Indian, Pakistani and British historical writing on Partition. To both Indian and Pakistani historiography, it is necessary for different reasons to portray religion as the sole cause of the split in British India, and therefore as the sole influence in the drawing of the Indo-Pakistani border. Religion served as a rallying cry for Muslim support for Pakistan, the region that the Muslim League designated in North-West India to provide India's Muslims with the political, social and economic rights they often lacked under Hindu and British rule. In response to the divided wishes of the Muslim populace, the League positioned religion and religious difference as the

reason that India's Muslims needed Pakistan, and this ideology persists in popular understandings of the nation. For the Congress Party, originally an avowedly secular organisation, as the struggle for Pakistan continued it was important to portray Muslims as separatists in opposition to the will of the united non-Muslim population. Britain's role in the acceptance and promotion of religion as the sole cause of the break-up of British India can be explained as an attempt to portray Partition not only as a necessary evil in order to prevent further communal bloodshed, but also to construct it as inevitable. Winterton's "lack of agreement between Moslems and Hindus" absolved the British government of blame and allowed Lord Frederick Pethick-Lawrence to declaim, "When the British withdraw it will be [the Indians'] fault, and not ours, if no authority has been set up, adequately supported, to take charge; and if India passes through confusion and turmoil into civil war it will be useless for them to blame this country."\[16\]

The common emphasis on religion is so well established in the perspectives of all three parties involved, that there has been little analysis of the role non-religious factors played in the creation of the border. In particular, the role of nationalism and the political climate appear to be discounted despite their influence on the border's formation. Issued with tangible and tacit threats from British Members of Parliament, the USSR, the United States, and the leaders of India's various influential religious, political and social organisations, the British government had to begin the process of decolonisation. With communal violence sweeping through Punjab and threatening the rest of the subcontinent, the British withdrawal had to be fast. The necessary speed prevented a well-researched and well-executed Partition from occurring, as Boundary Commissions had only three weeks finalise what would become an international border. The changing nature of Indian nationalisms also affected how Pakistan and India were viewed and, therefore, how the border was constructed.

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The Muslim League constructed their nationalism to encourage widespread support for Pakistan. Congress' initial secularism transformed into appeals to Sikh and Hindu nationalists as the League's popularity increased outside of the Muslim community. The competing Congress and League nationalisms influenced the border by determining what areas could be claimed by for India and Pakistan.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to determine the importance of religion in the construction of the Indo-Pakistani border. This thesis posits that religion was not the sole factor in the border's formation in 1947, despite its contemporary and subsequent construction as such. I seek to demonstrate that the roles of other factors in the construction of the border – nationalism and the contemporary political climate – were integral to the British role in India, and to the existence and direction of British India's main political parties.

Positioned to rout the existing nationalist narratives of India and Pakistan and to explode the myth of Britain as a caretaker for India's inevitable independence, this thesis will rely on primary sources from India, Pakistan and Britain in order to refute the status quo. India and Pakistan's national narratives, forged in the blood-letting of Partition, claim a moral superiority that neither deserve, and these constructions have dominated the discourse within and between these nations since 1947, producing tensions infused with religious symbolism and righteous demands on territories and peoples included on the "wrong" side of the border.

The approach taken in my thesis is new, as it uses primary sources from Pakistani, Indian and British archives to dispute and conflict the arguments prevalent in Partition-focused texts originating from these nations. The wealth of primary sources, including correspondence between the non-elites and the British, Congress and League leaderships, allows for new interpretations of the roles played by religion, nationalism and the contemporary political climate in the creation of the border. Radcliffe's destruction of his papers before he left India for Britain means that there is little insight into his thought process
when determining the border. However, the availability of correspondence between others involved in the border’s construction somewhat mitigates the loss of Radcliffe’s insight.

Before the exploration of the major themes can begin, it is important that the main terms are defined. Partition refers to the act of dividing British India into the Dominions of India and Pakistan in 1947. The focus of this thesis is on the period from the British government’s announcement of a new Indian independence policy on 20th February 1947 that allowed for the possibility of Pakistan, to the withdrawal of the British administration and armed forces on 15th August 1947. By limiting the remit of this thesis, I can focus more on the construction of the border, rather than the effects of its construction on India, Pakistan and Britain. Furthermore, my concentration on the Indo-Pakistani border ignores other border disputes in the region that were occurring at the time, and narrows the examination’s focus.

The violence that heralded Partition will be referred to as communal, as it was between different religious, class-based, and regional communities. Although “communal” is a broad term and ignores incidents of intra-communal targeted violence, it is useful for describing the wider patterns of violence common in Punjab throughout the Partition period. The limitation of the term is that it cannot describe violence between League and Congress supporters. Both Congress and the League utilised a wide range of political, social and economic policies to appeal to different groups, preventing each party’s adherents from forming a cohesive community.

Additionally, while the border divided both Punjab and Bengal, Bengal has typically been ignored in the British, Indian and Pakistani historiographies. Bengal, situated between

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17 In July 1947, the Afghani government began to suggest that they would lay claim to all of the territory up to the Jhelum River, which lies between Rawalpindi and Lahore. The first inklings of such a plan were in a speech given by the Afghani ambassador to Turkey, who urged Pashtun tribesmen to fight against Pakistan for the creation of Pathanistan [Afghanistan].

the Gangetic plain and the tribal hill districts abutting Burma, was poor and underdeveloped during British rule. Mass communal violence between Hindus and Muslims occurred in the province during August 1946 following Jinnah's declaration of a Direct Action Day in response to Congress' rejection of a British plan to create Pakistan. The violence spread from Calcutta to nearby Noakhali and Tippera, and from there into the rest of British India; Punjab began to experience its first bouts of communalism in early 1947. Unlike in Bengal, where the riots lasted less than a week, the violence did not stop in Punjab until after India and Pakistan gained independence on 15th August 1947. Punjab, which was fast becoming the agricultural and industrial heart of India, had a small Muslim majority with large Hindu and Sikh minorities.

The majority of primary sources concern Punjab, as the ongoing communalism and burgeoning industrialisation necessitated the production of reports, memos and notes between members of the British administration and local Indians. The absence of evidence regarding Bengal in the Partition period is somewhat problematic, but the extant evidence portrays it as a relatively peaceful counterpoint to the violence occurring around the Punjab border's construction. As a result of the dearth of Bengali primary sources, this thesis will focus on Punjab, and will use the experience of Bengal to provide contrast and context for the events occurring often simultaneously but over a thousand miles apart.
II. Religion.

The British designed their imperial policy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule) in British India to create and foment the divisions between religious communities that would prevent their unification in opposition to British rule. The policy constructed India's religions as predicated on communal isolation, i.e.: that the religious communities in India were homogenous and separate from one another. In reality, India's religions were heterodox, with Muslims and Hindus celebrating the same festivals, converting to other religions but maintaining religious cultural traditions, and living and working side by side in villages, towns and cities across much of India. To validate their insistence on confessional division and incompatibility, the British administration created a decennial census in 1871 that forced Indians to choose their professed religion from a list of options, with no opportunity to choose more than one religion or explain their religious beliefs. The results of the 1941 Census of India formed the basis for the initial notional boundary drawn by the Boundary Commissions, which ascertained “the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims” in Punjab and Bengal\(^\text{18}\) using only religious demographics.

The first lines drawn by the Commissions relied on religious demographics, rather than taking into account the “other factors” allowed under the commissions' remits,\(^\text{19}\) although there is some debate as to their intended permanence.\(^\text{20}\) Data from the 1941 Census determined the borders' initial shape, and its lines followed district boundaries rather than partitioning *tehsils*\(^\text{21}\) in the name of the economic concerns allowed for under the “other factors” clause.

\(^{18}\) *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., vol 440 [1946-47], cols. 62-76.
http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1947/jul/14/clause-3-bengal-and-assam

\(^{19}\) Radcliffe, “Bengal,” 1.


\(^{21}\) A *tehsil* is a small unit of land of variable size. A similar measurement is the *thana*, which is used to denote the jurisdiction of a police station. The Boundary Commissions used both measurements.
The census forced Britain's Indian subjects to describe themselves within the constraints imposed by the imperial authority. By 1941, the census categories for Hindus were "Scheduled castes other than Ad-Dharmis" and "Others" while Muslims were "Mohammedans." In some areas, such as Bengal, the British authorities attempted to further classify Hindus, using "Scheduled Castes," "Caste not returned," and "Others" to better categorise the complex relationship that existed as a result of tribal groups incorporating their own belief systems into Hinduism. The census offered no write-in box in which Indians could clarify their religious beliefs, and as such this British imperial policy reiterated the supposedly stark divisions between India's religious communities. Census data determined the number of government jobs and legislative assembly seats reserved for each community, and the publication of their literacy and employment rates served to emphasise these divides. The census figures clearly show low literacy and white-collar employment amongst the Muslim communities of both Bengal and Punjab, in comparison to those of the immediate Hindu communities. The Muslim League used such data to demonstrate the extent of Hindu domination and discrimination, and to demand a nation in which Muslims would be able to succeed. The explicit disparities between the two communities fed into the communalism that would come to shape the demand for Pakistan.

The census created sharp distinctions between Muslims and Hindus, despite the

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23 Tribal groups comprised 1,925,457 of the 61,460,377 people of Bengal, not including the princely states of Cooch Behar or Tripura. Indian Census Commission, *Census of India, Volume IV: Bengal* (Simla, India: Government of India Press, 1942), 45.
24 Bengal's 1941 census shows that of the province's Muslim population over the age of fifteen, only 56,978 out of 386,326 were literate (14.7 percent) and only 9,542 were literate in English (2.5 percent), a necessity when securing white-collar employment. In contrast, of Bengal's 321,879 Hindus, 88,224 were literate (27.4 percent) and 43,583 were literate in English (13.5 percent). These figures clearly show the educational and, therefore, economic disparity between the two communities, which resulted in accusations of Hindu domination of political, social and economic life, fuelling the demand for Pakistan. Indian Census Commission, *Bengal*, 136.
extensive cross-fertilisation of Islamic and Hindu beliefs in Bengal. Neither the British, League nor Congress recognised these religious commonalities in their proposals for the Bengal border, contrary to evidence of converted Muslims retaining the Hindu caste system and of multi-religious festivals. Instead, the leaderships based their demands for the border in the state-imposed divisions between Hindus and Muslims. Although the lack of clear and usable geographic boundaries in Bengal allowed for a more flexible interpretation of the functions of the border than in Punjab, where the Sikhs demanded all of the land between the Rivers Chenab and Sutlej, the leaderships persisted in promoting boundaries based in religious division.

The imperial British definition of India's Muslims as a single category in opposition to the divided Hindu community forced disparate sects to become a single, officially recognised community, despite the existence of deep-rooted sectarian divisions. In terms of political power, such a mass was useful—whereas Hindu seats on legislative bodies were divided into "General" for high-caste Hindus and "Depressed Classes" for those from low-castes, Muslims voted for representatives to "Muhammadan" seats, coalescing Muslim political opinion and allowing power-house parties such as the Muslim League to become successful as the Muslim vote was not divided. The result of such power was the League's claim to represent all Muslims, with Jinnah as their "sole spokesman," legitimised both its demand

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for Pakistan and its subsequent demand that all Muslim-majority areas be included within the new nation, despite some of the most important areas being ruled by non-League parties, such as the Congress Ministry of the NWFP or the Unionists of Punjab.

The Two Nation Theory

In their creation and enforcement of singular religious identities, the British further divided India's Muslims and non-Muslims. From the visibility of religious difference, such as Hindus' idolatry and Muslims' cow slaughter, sprang the notion that there were two nations in India, one Muslim and one Hindu, rather than one Indian nation. The Muslim League codified and popularised the narrative of an ideologically bifurcated India, naming this belief in the incompatibility of Hindu and Muslim societies the "Two Nation Theory." Muslims, according to Jinnah and the League's ideology, formed a distinct social order apart from Hindus, although this was an order that Hindus had accepted and co-propagated since the advent of Islam in India. The poor educational and economic opportunities available to many Muslims across India, as well as the obvious religious differences between the nation's Hindu and Muslim communities reinforced the sense of Islam as under attack by the British and Hindus but resurgent under the Muslim League's leadership. Widespread acceptance of the Two Nation ideology permitted Jinnah and the League to demand Pakistan as a homeland for India's Muslims, a homeland that would need to incorporate as many Muslims as possible within its borders. The ideology, therefore, legitimised the inclusion of areas within Pakistan in which Muslims did not form an outright majority but were still the largest single community.

To successfully manufacture a cohesive Muslim identity, the need for religious separation and the construction of racial difference, in which Indian Muslims were uniformly portrayed as warriors from the North-Western provinces, was necessary: the League had to
unite a population disparate in its social class, ethnic heritage, geographic base, cultural practice, and language. More than just uniting Indian Muslims as a political force, the League needed to convince the unified mass that it needed a separate nation, that millions of Muslims needed to uproot themselves and make a potentially violent pilgrimage to a land that did not yet exist: Pakistan. Without widespread Muslim support, Pakistan could not be considered a legitimate demand by either Congress or the British. The League needed this legitimacy in order to claim territory for Pakistan that was also home to Indian Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, and animists, despite the rhetoric of Pakistan as a homeland for India's Muslim population. Popular assent for Pakistan, as expressed in letters, speeches, referenda and marches, forced Congress to recognise the legitimacy of the League's demand. As a result, Congress had to abandon its quest for a united India and propose new borders, re-imagining the subcontinent solely in terms of religious demographics.

Prior to the British government's 20th February 1947 statement that instigated their relinquishment of power in India either to a central government governing a united nation, to existing provincial governments, or "in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people," the Congress Party leadership did not accept the Two Nation ideology as valid. Following the announcement, Congress began to incorporate the ideology into its own demands for an independent India, calling for the partitioning of the Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal along religious lines. Congress' rejection of all demands for Pakistan prior to the 20th February announcement prevented the enactment of many plans, including the ABC Plan that recommended India's division into three semi-autonomous regions along religious lines. The realised version of Pakistan was the most extreme of all the schemes, as it required the creation of a new nation-state that would be

32 Region A was the North-Western provinces, region B was central India, and region C was the North-Eastern region.
totally independent of India. Congress' political focus on gaining Indian independence from the British was based in the idea of a unified Indian populace, and its leaders were fearful that the demand for a separate Muslim nation delegitimised the crusade for independence as it showed the popular dissatisfaction with the idea of a unified India and with the Congress ruling-elite.

The Muslim League found the Two Nation ideology to be a useful method for inculcating the belief that India's Muslims needed an autonomous nation in which they could live separately from the Hindu oppressor. As increasing numbers of speeches, rallies and pamphlet popularised the Two Nation theory, many Indians began to accept the League's ideological position, as shown in the plethora of letters, notes and telegrams to Jinnah and other members of the League leadership in which it is referenced either directly or indirectly. Akbar Sultan, a magazine editor, sought article submissions on topics such as the "Creation of Pakistan as the only means of securing Hindu-Muslim unity," and the "Expression of opinion on the scheme for the formation of a concentrated Muslim bloc or creation of separate units for the Muslims in the provinces where they are in minority." These titles demonstrate the extent to which the desire and demand for Pakistan had permeated the Muslim public consciousness. Sultan's questions portray an Indian Muslim community that wanted to maintain friendly relations with their Hindu neighbours but could not do so while remaining in India. Popular imaginings of Pakistan exemplified the Two Nation ideology, creating miniature "Pakistans" based in historically Islamic cities such as Lucknow and Hyderabad for the Shia and Ahmadiyya sects, as well as for those Muslims who had not emigrated to Pakistan.

Widespread understanding and acceptance of the Two Nation theory is seen in the letters received by Jinnah from Indians and Britons of almost every religion and region. Pro-

Pakistan correspondents often detailed the injustices wrought by high-caste Hindus, whether in personal experiences of Hindu landlords and debt-collectors or in mass communal killings in Bihar. Sultan added that, “Those of our brethren who dream of Ram Raj in India are determined to wipe out all Muslims along with the traces of their culture from this land,” and that Muslims and Hindus could not live together in peace. This belief that Hindus wanted to “wipe out” Muslims was echoed by staunch League-supporter Mrs. K.L. Rallia Ram, the Anglo-Indian wife of an Indian Christian member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, when she decried Congress’ members as Caste Hindus and Mahasabhaites who “plan to wipe out all those who stand in their way.” The implication of an active and violent Hindu domination was that Pakistan was necessary in order to prevent further bloodshed. Increased incidences of communal violence resulted as Congress and the League defined Pakistan’s construction in religious terms, with the border as the dividing line between hostile religious groups. Both parties’ claims on the border were over-ambitious, demanding territory for Pakistan in which Muslims were the minority, and retaining Muslim-majority areas within India. The vagueness of the borders increased the violence, as Indians found their homes and themselves in “enemy” territory. The choice for those on the wrong side of the border was stark: either flee and risk the violence that the columns of refugees attracted, or join one of the many militias masquerading as a civil defence organisation.

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34 Ibid: 137
36 The Hindu Mahasabha is a Hindu-nationalist religious, social and political organisation that claims India is a Hindu nation and is hostile to non-Hindu Indians.
38 For instance, the League claimed Calcutta, with its non-Muslim majority of 67.5 percent, for Pakistan, while Congress demanded almost all of the land up until the River Chenab, which included Gujranwala, the population of which was over seventy percent Muslim. O.H.K. Spate, “The Partition of India and the Prospects of Pakistan,” Geographical Review 38, no. 1 (January 1948): 213.
39 The diary of Major General T.W. Rees, the commander of the Punjab Boundary Force (PBF), gives many examples of the effects of refugees moving through areas in which they were the minority: “The arrival of
and stay and fight for life, property and ideology.

As the public accepted the Two Nation ideology, so did the three political leaderships, allowing for some agreement and compromise regarding the border. Acceptance of the Two Nation meant that Pakistan was deemed necessary, instigating its creation. Although the League, Congress and the British Government held contrasting visions of Pakistan and India's future borders, all three parties agreed that India and Pakistan should be created from the geographically contiguous Muslim-majority areas of India's North-West and North-East. On all sides there was much debate regarding whether or not Pakistan was seceding from the future independent state of India. Brigadier Toby Low, MP for Blackpool North, stated in the House of Commons that the Congress Party in England believed that the British government's use of "India" in the Indian Independence Bill "is a proof that His Majesty's Government take the view that Pakistan has seceded from the whole of India." Kanhaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, a prominent Hindu member of the Constituent Assembly, commented that he did "not see any near prospect of the seceding parts coming back to India," sparking anger among many of Jinnah's correspondents. Despite his anti-Pakistan stance, Munshi accepted the Two Nation ideology, and he categorised the creation of Pakistan as the result of irreconcilable religious differences. The League's Zafrullah Khan wrote to Jinnah asking that Pakistan be called "Muslim India," in order to avoid accusations of secession.

Non-Muslim Refugees from the West into East Punjab was causing increased unrest there...increase in refugees resulting in communal clashes between refugee groups whilst passing through same area." Major General T.W. Rees, Report on the Punjab Boundary Force (The P.B.F), 1 August – Midnight 1 / 2 September: 1947 (New Delhi, India: 15th November 1947), 12.
For instance, in retaliation for the killing of Muslims in East Punjab, the Ahmadiyya community in Qadian set up a defence force that included two light aircraft, although these were later grounded by the PBF. Rees, PBF, 16.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1947/jul/14/clause-1-the-new-dominions
A legislative body tasked with writing the Constitution of India.
Two Nation Theory: Historiographical Approaches

The central role of the Two Nation ideology in the ideological, physical and political formation of Pakistan meant that it could not be ignored by Partition's actors, who have privileged the ideology in different ways throughout the six decades since the subcontinent's independence from Britain. Pakistani historiography unanimously accepted the ideology as the basis for Pakistan's creation, with the border shaped by Jinnah with religion as the primary determinant until the publication of Ayesha Jalal's The Sole Spokesman in 1985 in which she challenges Jinnah's assumed role in the politicking surrounding the drawing of the border. Although Jalal stated that "the march of time has in many instances cast partition historiography into a more rigid mould," the growing prevalence of Subaltern Studies as a school of thought continues to influence many authors' interpretations of the creation of the Indo-Pakistani border.

The role and portrayal of the Two Nation theory in Pakistani historiography changed with time. In the first years following independence, support for the ideology was rooted in legitimising the need for Pakistan's existence in the face of a dominant, and often aggressive, India. The border's foundation in religious majorities made it strangely shaped and hotly contested. The widespread belief amongst Congress and British leaders that Pakistan "was bound to come back" to India, whether as the result of financial failure or military intervention, added to Pakistan's paranoia, and these fears are expressed during the tribunals regarding the disputed areas. Authors from Asim Roy to Nicholas Mansergh discuss the

45 Jalal is a leading academic in revisionist and subaltern histories of Pakistan and the Indian subcontinent.
47 This belief was not unanimous; see K.M Munshi's previously quoted comment that he thought it was unlikely Pakistan would be re-integrated within a united India.
presumption by the British and Congress leaderships that Pakistan would not be a viable nation-state, and conclude that this prediction resulted in a hastily-constructed border that would not need to last. In direct comparison to Congress's demands to make Pakistan inoperable as a new nation-state, the Muslim League pursued the border they believed would give them the best long-term future, and incorporated into Pakistan Muslim-minority areas that had fertile agricultural land, thriving industries, working irrigation systems, or large urban areas.

Iftikhar Malik exemplifies Pakistani nationalist historiography in his acceptance of the Two Nation theory as the cause of Partition. The failure of the Pakistani border to incorporate all Indian Muslims has, according to Malik, proven the Two Nation ideology to be true. He cites the post-independence Indian disavowal of Muslim experiences and history as an example of the incompatibility of Islam and Hinduism. He criticises the Hindu-centricity of the “Indian school of thought,” including the Indian Muslim scholar Mushirul Hasan within this category. Malik is not an aberration, but rather a midpoint in Pakistani historical analysis of the creation of Pakistan: he positions the Two Nation theory at the centre of his historical analysis, arguing that deep-seated religious differences expressed

50 Although Roy focuses on the high-politics of Partition, his scholarship reflects the broader themes of the SSG, promoting an alternative history of the division of India that does not accept religion as the sole factor in the border’s creation.
51 Mansergh’s scholarship reflects the period in which he was writing, as he is more conservative in his reticence to criticise the accepted version of Partition.
52 Ibid: 16.
53 An example of this was the incorporation of Amritsar, a large urban area, despite only forty-six percent of its population being Muslim, according to the 1941 Census. Similarly, the League included within Pakistan the lucrative tea plantations of Jalpaiguri, the population of which was only twenty-three percent Muslim.
Indian Census Commission, Punjab, 33.
Indian Census Commission, Bengal, 20.
55 Ibid, 41.
56 Ibid, 40.
57 Ibid, 273.
through violence determined the border, while concurrently removing all agency from Indian actors. Malik does, however, accept that the Pakistani government has used historical writing to promote its version of Partition and vision for Pakistan; that of an underdog that has emerged victorious.\textsuperscript{58}

The Two Nation ideology validated and perpetuated the British imperial divide-and-rule policy; having deliberately isolated India's most populous religions from the other and stoked communal antagonism, the end result was the need for a separate nation founded in the principle of religious difference. British historical writing in the immediate aftermath of Partition relied upon religion as the primary factor in the creation of Pakistan, although the border's formation was largely ignored. To the British administration, the Two Nation theory validated Britain's paternalism as, without the imperial power, the Indian subcontinent would have devolved into its distinct communal identities, resulting in the guerrilla communal warfare seen in Punjab throughout 1947. British officials' fear of unending communal bloodshed is visible in the relentless descriptions of violence in Punjab, and in the texts produced during Partition that position the border as the only hope for a peaceful future.

India's political climate directly affects the style of the Partition historiography produced, with the border and Partition construed as the fault of the League during periods of tension with Pakistan. Indian nationalist historiography accepts or rejects the Two Nation theory depending on the popular perception of whether India or Pakistan is stronger. B.L. Sukhwal's India: A Political Geography is an example of such politicised historiography, labelling the border as a "boundary,"\textsuperscript{59} thereby implying a degree of impermanence, and painting India as a secular paradise in comparison to Pakistan's brutal theocracy.\textsuperscript{60} Sukhwal's book was published during the fight for East Pakistan's independence from West Pakistan, in which India was intimately involved as the provider of arms, support and personnel.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 45.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 112.
Consequently, Indian historiography from this period is embedded in an anti-Pakistan nationalist rhetoric, and the influence of anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim Indian nationalism is seen in texts produced during periods of heightened conflict over the ownership of Kashmir and during the rule of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party in the late nineteen-nineties. In these texts, the impermanence of the border is critical to the nationalist rhetoric, as it suggests that Pakistan can be retaken.

The rooting of the Indo-Pakistani border in religious majorities creates an impression of impermanence by linking the border to religious demographics. Pakistani demands for a flexible Bengal border in the post-Partition tribunals, and subsequent Indo-Pakistani wars over the border through Kashmir, served to reinforce the fear that Pakistan will lay claim to Indian land, leading to an increasingly rigid interpretation of the border by India. The deliberate production of a Hindu-Muslim dichotomy in which all Muslims are pro-Pakistan while all Hindus are pro-India has helped to solidify the border within the popular imagination, but Hindu nationalists remain fearful while at the same time calling for India’s reunification. The border thus becomes a communal battleground as subcontinental supremacy becomes determined by territory. Hindu-nationalist historians interpret the debates in 1947 over the inclusion of non-Muslim-majority areas within Pakistan as evidence of the Muslim League’s aim to destroy Hindu India. By privileging religion as the primary factor in the border’s formation, Indian nationalist historiography constructs India as a united Hindu nation with a Muslim/Pakistani “fifth column,” and enemy both within and without that serves a unifying purpose in a creation of the national narrative rooted in the shape and formation of the border.

Indian nationalist texts deliberately obscure non-Muslim support for Pakistan by refuting or ignoring all other causes of Partition than the Two Nation theory and religion.

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61 Ahmad, “Tribunal,” 331.
The Boundary Commissions, composed as they were of the League and Congress party faithful, absented opinions outside of the accepted nationalisms from the debates over the border’s placement. Pro-Indian historiography\textsuperscript{62} denies the agency of political, geographic and economic factors in the borders' creation, relying instead on the tropes of the Two Nation theory and Islam as a divisive force, creating a simplistic interpretation of history in which one party — the Muslim League — is solely at fault. The deliberate obfuscation of non-religious causes of Partition by the historiographies of Britain, India and Pakistan means that primary sources must be privileged when parsing the factors that caused the border’s shape and formation.

Gyanendra Pandey\textsuperscript{63} refutes the myth that the League caused Partition, as is widely accepted in much Indian historiography, using primary sources produced by both elites and subalterns. He demonstrates that while the League leadership railed against the division of Bengal and Punjab, the Bengali Hindu Mahasabha and professional elites campaigned for Bengal's division in a bid to secure the largest possible allotment of land for their co-religionists.\textsuperscript{64} Similarly, Punjab's Sikh politicians and armed militias campaigned and fought for their state's division despite the resulting cleavage of their community.\textsuperscript{65} Indian agency in the division of Punjab and Bengal remains ignored in much Indian historiography, as emphasised by Joya Chatterji's refutation of the accepted "fact" that Britain caused the partitions.\textsuperscript{66} Pandey's refutation of the nationalist catechism of Muslim divisiveness and non-Muslim unity results in an analysis in which the actions of those outside of the immediate decision-making bodies remain influential, especially as the violence they foment is directly

\textsuperscript{62}Not all pro-Indian historiography is written by Hindus. The high-profile Indian Muslim intellectuals M.J. Akhbar and Mushirul Hasan are regularly criticised for their conventional pro-Congress readings of the events surrounding the partitioning of British India.

\textsuperscript{63}Pandey is a founding member of the SSG.


\textsuperscript{65}Ibid.

related to the speed with which the borders were drawn, a factor that prevented the inclusion of pro-Pakistan non-Muslim areas within a more nuanced version of Pakistan's borders.

**The Proposals**

In Punjab, the borderlines demanded by Congress and the League differed by hundreds of miles. The Congress and League proposals were clearly based in religious factors and the parties' positions within the Two Nation framework. Whereas the League aimed to include within Pakistan all areas in which Muslims were the majority community, Congress was loath to cede any territory to their political opponents, resulting in a proposed border that only awarded to Pakistan areas in which there were almost no non-Muslims: its proposed border reached into areas in which Muslims comprised almost eighty percent of the population. Such territorial arrogance strengthened the League's claims of Hindu oppression. In comparison to Congress' demand, the border proposed by the League was more conservative, only covering the areas in which Muslims held outright majorities or in which they were the largest single group, for instance in Amritsar where Muslims comprised 47.1 percent of the population with Hindu and Sikh minorities of 36.8 percent and fifteen percent respectively.\(^{67}\) The Punjab Boundary Commission drew the final border almost halfway between the two proposals, gifting India the Muslim-majority districts of Gurdaspur and Ferozepore (now Firozpur) and denying Pakistan access to the canal system that was essential for successful agriculture.

In the demands for the Bengal border, the Congress Party was more conservative than the League. The League's demands stretched into the tea plantations of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, despite these regions having small Muslim minorities of 2.4 percent and twenty-

\(^{67}\) Figures calculated from the data provided in the *Census of India, Volume VI: Punjab*: 32-33.
three percent respectively. Furthermore, their border incorporated the Hindu-majority city of Calcutta within Pakistan’s border. Although some members of the League leadership contended that Calcutta had a Muslim rather than Hindu majority, this decision appears to have been based in economic rather than religious factors. The League also fought for the inclusion of the mineral- and timber-rich Lushai Hills and Chittagong Hill Tracts within Pakistan, despite these areas being almost entirely devoid of Muslims. In comparison, Congress mostly adhered to the principle of religious majorities as the determinant for the placement of areas within either India or Pakistan. Aside from parts of Muslim-majority Jessore, Murshidabad and Malda, Congress asked only for areas with large Hindu majorities, unlike in Punjab.

Religious factors also influenced the initial proposals for the construction of the Bengal border. Whereas in Punjab, the three religious communities were Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, there were Muslim, Hindu and substantial tribal communities in Bengal. Unlike Punjab, in which the Sikh community, whilst large, had no overall majority in any district, tribal communities in Bengal were the majority community in the Chittagong Hill Tracts district, thereby complicating the construction of East Pakistan under a rubric designed to divide Hindu from Muslim.

**Case Study: The Chittagong Hill Tracts**

The allocation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to either India or Pakistan was particularly contentious. A meeting between Congress, League and British political leaders that took place the day after India and Pakistan's independence from Britain demonstrates the complicated relationship between religion and the construction of the Indo-Pakistani border.

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59 The Lushai Hills had no Muslims, whilst the Tracts' Muslim population amounted to 2.8 percent of the total. Ibid.
as well as the importance to both India and Pakistan of gaining and maintaining as much
territory as possible. The Tracts had a large non-Muslim majority, with only 7,270 Muslims
out of a population of 247,053. Consequently, Nehru argued that their demographics alone
should put them within India, although the tribes’ views are not recorded. The complicating
factor was that although Muslims only formed 2.9 percent of the Tracts’ population, 94.5
percent of the population was classified as tribal, not adhering to any of the categories of
religion available in the 1941 Census of India. Although a large non-Muslim majority
usually resulted in an area’s inclusion within India, Hindus compromised only two percent of
the population thereby giving Muslims the upper hand, as socially and economically
disadvantaged groups across British India often supported Pakistan.

After much debate, Radcliffe maintained the award of the Tracts to Pakistan based
upon their physical, economic and communication links to the Indian province of Assam
rather than the religious reasons cited by Nehru and the Congress leadership. East Pakistan
needed a port, following the loss of Calcutta to India, and the Tracts gave Chittagong Port in
Chittagong District unfettered access to the Kannaphuli River. The decision to site the Tracts
within Pakistan rather than India shows that non-religious factors often dominated in the
awards of the most contentious areas to either India or Pakistan.

In the discussion surrounding the allocation of the Tracts to Pakistan, Nehru implicitly
defined Pakistan as Muslim and India as non-Muslim, a common sentiment during the
fraught period surrounding Partition. The effect on the border was to polarise it along
religious lines. Such a definition is problematic due to its explicit exclusion of Muslims from

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70 The religious composition of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1941 (the most recent data) was: 283 Scheduled
Caste Hindus, 971 “Caste not returned” Hindus, 3627 “Other” Hindus, 7270 Muslims, 1154 Buddhists, 278
Sikhs, 60 Indian Christians, 39 Anglo-Indians, 17 “Other” Christians, and 1 Jain, with 233,392 people listed
as “Tribes” but without further elaboration on tribal religions.
Indian Census Commission, Bengal, 44-47.

71 Minutes of a Meeting to Discuss the Demarcation of the Boundaries between India and Pakistan in Bengal
India, and disavowal of non-Muslim support for Pakistan. Under the initial proposals for the border, religion was equated with nationality and areas were included within the new nations on religious demographics alone. Only later, after the selection of the Boundary Commissions, were the nebulous “other factors” used to justify the inclusion of Muslim areas in India and non-Muslim areas within Pakistan.

**Non-Muslim Support for Pakistan.**

Liaqat Ali Khan emphasised Pakistan’s commitment to religious freedom in response to Nehru’s implication that Pakistan’s Islamic basis meant the Muslim-minority Tracts should be awarded to India. Religious freedom was a founding principle of Pakistan and can be found in the Lahore Resolution, which states, “adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities...for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights.” This policy of religious and cultural tolerance and freedom encouraged the support of many minority religious groups, such as the Adharmis and Christians, who were satisfied by such assurances in the same way that many low-caste Hindus believed that an Islamic commitment to equality would end their penury under the caste system and an end to the high-caste Hindu hegemony of the public and political spheres. Evidence of such support is seen in the pro-Pakistan letters from non-Muslims and in election results in which non-Muslims vote against their communal political parties.

Letters to Jinnah from Sikhs, Hindus, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians show that many Indians were willing to support a plan deemed anathema by many of their co-religionists. W.B. Scott, an Anglo-Indian Christian from Calcutta, wrote requesting that non-

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72 Ibid, Point 14.
73 Malik, *Lahore*, 299
Muslims be allowed to join the Muslim League, while Sant Singh Talwar, a Sikh newspaper publisher in the NWFP, wrote to offer the Frontier Gazette's support for the province's League Ministry. Talwar also mentions that he knew Sikhs in Punjab who had joined the Muslim League's Civil Disobedience Movement, emphasising that non-Muslims would not only express their support but would also act upon it. A telegram from Rawail Singh, a representative from the Kurram Valley's minority community, expressed his community's support for both the League and Pakistan. Such minority support, hailing both from disputed areas such as Calcutta, and from those firmly inside Pakistan's borders such as the Kurram Valley, demonstrated that Pakistan had evolved to become a safe-haven for many minority groups. The border, however, does not reflect the diverse body of opinion that supported the Pakistan scheme, instead sticking to the contiguous Muslim-majority areas of Punjab and Bengal. Support for a more nuanced border is seen in Noon's letters in which he bemoans the "very curious shapes" from which Pakistan will be formed if only majority contiguous areas are used, and calls for the Boundary Commission to not count Scheduled Castes as Hindus so that the League could "get a lot more territory."

Non-Muslims formed important communities in the borderlands, and League efforts to encourage support for Pakistan amongst them were successful, as seen in the results of referenda on the creation of Pakistan and in the letters of support received by Jinnah. In a referendum in July 1947, almost twenty-thousand more Scheduled Caste Punjabis voted

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against Congress than for it. In the bitterly communal political parlance of the times, a vote against Congress was a vote in favour of the Muslim League and Pakistan, demonstrating the degree to which low-caste Hindus supported Pakistan's creation. Despite the overwhelming evidence depicting non-Muslim support for Pakistan, it is still rarely mentioned in Partition texts produced in both India and Pakistan, although a more complex understanding of the roles played by social class and geographical region in support for both the Muslim League and Pakistan are slowly developing.

The major flaw in the construction of the Indo-Pakistani border was that it was predicated on religious separation, and ignored that in both Punjab and Bengal, as well as throughout the rest of British India, many Indian Christians and low-caste Hindus supported the creation of Pakistan. Although Hindu-Muslim communal violence prevented the emigration of pro-Pakistan Scheduled Caste Hindus to Pakistan, many Indian Christians chose to move to Karachi rather than remain in India. The Boundary Commissions' remit to "demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of Bengal [and Punjab] on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous areas of Muslims and non-Muslims," ignored the anti-Pakistan Muslim supporters of the NWFP and Punjab's Congress and Unionist Ministries, and the pro-Pakistan sentiments expressed by large numbers of non-Muslims resident in the borderlands.

The Role of Communal Violence in Creating the Border

As the Commissions' final awards neared, incidences of communal violence increased. Contemporary accounts portrayed the violence as directly linked to the creation of the border,

78 Firoz Khan Noon gave the totals as 9,690 for Congress, 29,707 against.
although it is little mentioned in the Commissions' official documents. Oblique references in
the 16th August meeting are made to awards in Punjab that will “anger the Sikhs” and
possibly require population transfers at a time when millions of Indians were trying to reach
borders that were not yet finalised. The perceived instability of the official borders led
people to improvise their own. Yasmin Khan states that people in the disputed border regions
often used dead bodies to demarcate ethnic boundaries, piles of Hindu or Muslim corpses
mapping their own version of the Radcliffe Line. The use of bodies as ethnic and
geopolitical markers demonstrates the uncertainty felt by many Indians and Pakistanis in the
aftermath of independence as their nation’s boundaries remained unclear.

The role of communal violence in shaping the Indo-Pakistani border was two-fold:
firstly, it provoked a speedy resolution, resulting in the current shape of the border, and
secondly, it provided the subaltern population with some agency in the border’s formation.
Although communities sent petitions to the Boundary Commissions for their inclusion within
either India or Pakistan, very few of the Commissions’ decisions were ever reneged upon,
and the few changes made appear to have been the result of the personal relationships and
biases of the leaderships rather than from the pleas sent in by Khulna, Gurdaspur or Qadian
residents. The official route stymied, residents of disputed areas turned to violence to secure
property, wreak revenge, or claim areas for their co-religionists.

Contemporary accounts of communal violence portray a highly-organised structure,
with mobs targeting specific areas to rid them of Muslims or non-Muslims, in order to change
the course of the border through the elimination of its religious majority. A report by P.
Brenden, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon from January 1945-June 1947, details a
“concerted and planned exercise...undertaken [by Jat and Ahir Hindus] to clear the region of

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82 Minutes, Points 12, 15.
83 Yasmin Khan, The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan (New Haven, CT: Yale University
Press, 2007), 125.
Muslims,” as Gurgaon’s large Muslim majority put it at risk of inclusion within Pakistan. Mobs of up to twenty-thousand Hindus swarmed through Muslim villages in Gurgaon, burning, killing and looting until the residents had either fled or been killed. *Dawn* warned that this religio-ethnic cleansing would “wipe out” Gurgaon’s Muslims, and Liaqat Ali Khan appealed for British troops to intervene.  

The Sikh princely states were considered by the Hindu and Sikh militias as areas where Muslims “could be mopped up at leisure,” with mass killings supported by Sikh rulers who provided armed forces to carry out carefully planned massacres. Sikhs used systematic violence against East Punjab’s Muslims “to clear a territorial space for the Sikh homeland – a space bereft of Muslims,” and lay claim to lands not yet allotted to either India or Pakistan. A secret note sent from Jenkins to Mountbatten states that Sikh leaders, including the Maharaja of Patiala and the Dewan of Nabha, were “planning raids on Muslim villages” and providing arms and explosives with the aim of creating a Sikh-majority area.

Ian Copland and David Gilmartin posit that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs used violence to claim moral authority over new land, and in doing so reify the religious ideologies that they believed necessitated the creation of the border. Such brutal tactics, well in advance of the border’s finalisation, demonstrated the lengths to which Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were willing to go to secure their homes for their new homelands.

Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, detailed the progression from “standard

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88 Ibid: 690.
89 Ibid: 696.
90 Ibid: 660.
92 Copland, “Maharajahs,” 660.

communalism" to unprecedented urban slaughter and rural massacres, as "the communities settled down to do the maximum amount of damage to one another while exposing the minimum expanse of surface to the troops and police."\(^{93}\) Jenkins explained to Mountbatten in a letter detailing the many atrocities taking place in Punjab, "We are faced not with an ordinary exhibition of political or communal violence, but with a struggle between the communities for the power which we are shortly to abandon," labelling the violence a "communal war of succession, which...has produced many of the symptoms of a revolution."\(^{94}\) Even before the 3rd June Plan had been released, there had been the promise of communal violence as the deciding factor in the shaping of the border. A General Secretary of the Congress Party, Acharya Jugal Kishore, stated that, although an impartial boundary commission would finalise the boundary, if "the Muslim League disagreed, a civil war would decide."\(^{95}\) The border was directly influenced by the constant threat of violence should certain areas not be awarded to India or Pakistan. The effects of such a threat can be seen in Radcliffe's award of Ferozepore to India following Nehru and VP Menon's promise of civil war should it go to Pakistan.\(^{96}\)

Unprecedented levels of communal violence in Punjab prevented the imperial authorities from maintaining effective control of the province, despite the introduction of the avowedly neutral Punjab Boundary Force (PBF), and many areas were essentially ceded to the violence. As a result, these communities instituted their own makeshift, and often communal, legal codes, further exacerbating the violence and concretising the border in popular understanding. In his report to Mountbatten, Jenkins divided up the communalism into three phases: the first phase, "standard communalism," lasted from 4th-20th March, and


\(^{94}\) Ibid, 4.


\(^{96}\) Beaumont, Truth, 4.
was followed by preparation and practice in the second phase from 21st March-9th May, and finally the settling down to calculatedly inflict maximum damage from the 10th May onwards.  

As a result, the casualties in Lahore, a disputed city, until 2nd August 1947 were 382 dead and 823 seriously injured, with similarly high numbers in almost all of Punjab’s major cities and rural districts.

The Princely States

The rulers and populations of Punjab’s princely states were Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, although many rulers did not share the same religion as the majority of their subjects. In a reflection of the deference accorded to aristocracies during this period, the British, Congress and League ostensibly allowed the states’ Nawabs and Rajas, rather than their subjects, to choose their allegiance to either India or Pakistan. When speaking to a gathering of indecisive rulers in July 1947, Mountbatten said that they were “theoretically free to link their future with whichever Dominion they may care,” although the corollary was that “there are certain geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded,” and that the vast majority of states were “irretrievably linked” to India. The spectre of small clusters of pro-Pakistan states strung throughout Northern and Central India terrified Congress, which set out to co-opt recalcitrant states into the future independent India, either through force or diplomacy.

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98 The casualty figures were as follows: Lahore (382 killed; 823 seriously injured), Amritsar (315; 666), Multan (131; 133), Rawalpindi (99; 230). Higher rural casualties were the result of indiscriminate attacks on entire villages: Rawalpindi district (2164 killed; 167 seriously injured), Attock district (630; 30), Jhelum district (210; 2), Gurgaon (284;125), Amritsar district (110; 70), Multan district (58; 50), Hoshiarpur (51; 19), Jullundur (47; 51). However, Jenkins clarifies the Gurgaon figures by stating that they are incomplete, and that he expects many more deaths and injuries to be reported.

Ibid, 9.

99 Only two princely states were affected by the Bengal border – Tripura and Cooch-Behar – and both acceded to India early on. The focus of this section, therefore, will be the much-contested Punjabi states.


101 Ibid.
D.S. Sadulla represented a conglomeration of five Gujarati states\(^{102}\) during their accession to Pakistan, yet none of these, nor Suket\(^{103}\) or Manavadar,\(^{104}\) were included within Pakistan despite their leaders' best efforts. The case of Manavadar mirrors that of Junagadh: Hindu-majority districts ruled by a Muslim dynasty (the Nawabs of Manavadar and Junagadh were cousins) that acceded early on to Pakistan, but were integrated into India by armed force following occupation by the Indian police and army, demonstrating the degree to which India manipulated a border that the British had always intended to include princely states.\(^{105}\)

**Conclusion**

The Boundary Commissions appeared to privilege religious factors in their delineation of the Indo-Pakistani borders, as seen in their awards of Muslim-majority areas in the North-West and North-East to Pakistan rather than India. However, the use of “other factors” to determine the placement of areas within Pakistan or India gave the Commissions some flexibility, and resulted in the award of Muslim-majority Ferozepore and Gurdaspur to India and the Muslim-minority Khulna and Chittagong Hill Tracts to Pakistan. Smaller awards, such as that of Muslim-majority Zira tehsil to India, were not as insistently contested. The politicking that surrounded the borders demonstrated that, even in a fight for democracy and self-determination, personal connections won out.

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102 Sudulla represented the *talukdars*[district rulers] of Dasada, Vanod and Jainabad, the Chief of Bahuna and the Nawab of Radhanpur.


105 The British administration presumed that those states that could remain independent would be allowed to do so, as demonstrated by comments throughout Parliamentary debates that concern setting up commerce between Britain, India, Pakistan and the states (which are usually Travancore, Hyderabad and Mysore). Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 5th ser., vol 439 [1946-47], cols. 2507-2508 http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1947/jul/10/indian-independence-bill
Religion was not the sole determinant of the final border, nor of the borders proposed by Congress and the League. However, the Two Nation ideology privileged a religious interpretation of Pakistan's creation, and the omnipresence of communal violence meant that Indians soon equated the border with sectarian savagery. The imperial legacy of *divide et impera* is seen in the actions of the Boundary Commissions: communities that were intricately linked through familial bonds and shared festivals were deliberately separated, first through the census, then through the politicisation of religion, and finally through the drawing of the Radcliffe Line.
III. Nationalism

While religion was a factor in the formation of the border, it was not the sole determinant. The boundaries proposed by both sides were products of their parties' brand of nationalism, whether the all-India secularism of the Congress Party or the League's pro-Pakistan and anti-Hindu stance, giving nationalism an integral role in the formation of the Indo-Pakistani border. Throughout the early twentieth-century, Congress encouraged an Indian nationalism based in difference from the British and the need for home-rule and independence. In the nineteen-forties, this all-encompassing nationalist ideology found itself obsolete in the face of a resurgence of Islamic nationalism forcing the reinvention of Congress' nationalism. The League, having never been in a position of political power before, was forced to rethink its nationalist ideology and goals.

Upon the release of the 3rd June Plan, groups other than Congress and the League, such as the Meos and Jats, began agitating for their own autonomous states. The demand for nationhood became more than just a Muslim enterprise, as the British government's 20th February statement decreed that the British government could hand power to either a central and all-Indian government, or to provincial or newly created governments, leaving room for the creation of any viable state. This statement, the intention of which was to provide for the creation of Pakistan, inspired other religious, ethnic, regional and caste groups to submit their own demands for national autonomy. These

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106 The last time Islamic nationalism had any support was during the Khilafat Movement. The Movement sought to preserve the Ottoman Empire's Islamic Caliphate, attracted support from both Congress and the nascent League. It was an Islamic nationalist movement that was popular amongst non-Muslims – Gandhi was a prominent supporter – but it ultimately failed when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, Turkey’s new ruler, abolished the Caliphate and enforced secularism across Turkey.

107 The 3rd June Plan (so called because the British, Congress and League leaders approved it on the 3rd June 1947) set out the notional boundaries and thus created a more concrete version of Pakistan than ever before.

108 The Meos are a Muslim group from Gurgaon district who practice a mixture of Islam and Hinduism while the Jats are a multi-religious caste, members of which are mostly found in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab. Both of these groups lived in areas claimed for Pakistan by the League.


demands were based in the same principles advocated by the League: that the group formed a
distinct nation within the Indian population and their difference from the ruling elites
disadvantaged them politically, socially and economically, and that they required their own
nation to rectify these wrongs.

The Muslim League

In their appeals to Indian Muslims, the Muslim League constructed the need for the
establishment of Pakistan as a clash between Islamic and Hindu nationalisms. Hindu
nationalism claimed Akhand Bharat (United India) – a nation stretching from the Khyber
Pass to the Burmese wetlands in which Hindu superiority ensured their domination over all.
Islamic nationalism, on the other hand, emphasised that the unification of the Muslim polity
would restore India's Muslims from their current position of subordination under Hindu rule
to their rightful role as both rulers and subjects under sharia (Qur'anic) law. In this section,
the term “Islamic nationalism” refers to nationalism rooted in the Islamic ideal of a single
religious community founded in Qur'anic principles, whereas “Muslim nationalism” refers to
the Muslim League's construction of a nationalism that was designed to appeal to India's
diverse and disparate Muslim communities by promising them solutions to societal problems.
Both types of nationalism played important roles in the construction of Pakistan, both on
ideological and practical levels.

The popularisation of Pakistan made clear the impossibility of incorporating all Indian
Muslims within its border became clear. Twenty-five percent of British India's population
was Muslim, and most did not live in the North-Western provinces designated to become
Pakistan should the moment arise. Pakistan, then, while constructed by the League as a land
for all Muslims, could never have been such. The original borders drawn by the League

111 Leonard Binder, “Pakistan and Modern Islamic-Nationalist Theory. Part II,” Middle East Journal 12, no. 1
demonstrate their intention to include as many of India's Muslims within Pakistan as possible, as do the entreaties by nearby Muslim-rulled princely states to cede their lands to the new nation, but the majority of India's Muslims remained excluded from the nation being built in their name.

Islamic nationalism emphasises the *umma* (community) as the basis for the Muslim nation, and furthermore the *umma* must be unified in their understanding of how the new nation will look and behave.\(^{112}\) Although the term “Islamic nationalism” is almost oxymoronic, as all Muslims should be united regardless of ethnic, linguistic, social or political divisions, the Islamic philosopher al-Farabi's concept of “community of utility,” a state not given theological sanction but that supported an Islamic way of life\(^{113}\) could be related to Pakistan depending on its future successes and failings. Thus, the quasi-approval of the Indian *ulama* (community of Islamic scholars), sanctified Pakistan and gained the League support from pious Muslims. The Islamic nationalism in which the Muslim League founded Pakistan was based in a territorial objective, rather than a territorial reality. Many of the region’s Muslim residents supported Congress rather than the League, and demand for Pakistan was low. There was much discussion amongst the League leadership regarding the composition of Pakistan, especially because many, including Bengal's Prime Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, had loyalties that lay elsewhere: post-Partition, Suhrawardy would lead the Awami League, the party that fought for Bengali independence from West Pakistan.

Jinnah refused to define Pakistan, letting slip little more than that it would be composed of “geographically contiguous units...in which Muslims are in the majority.”\(^{114}\) Despite the shape and composition of Pakistan remaining unconfirmed until the Punjab Boundary Commission released its awards on 17\(^{th}\) August 1947, Jinnah was willing to define

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its political objective of providing Muslims with an autonomous nation in which they could be free from Hindu and Congress domination. The plausibility of such a state remained in question, however. Drafts of the Lahore Resolution show that there was much debate as to whether a better approach would be a Muslim federation within an independent India rather than a fully-independent Muslim nation, demonstrating that not even the League leadership fully understood Pakistan's proposed composition. As a result, Jinnah had to clarify that the League position was that, “Pakistan is to be a federation all by itself...Pakistan and Hindustan, independent of each other.”

The Lahore Resolution uses the term “Independent States,” a phrase that was later altered to “State” thereby removing any suggestion of Bengali independence or the formation of an independent federation of princely states. As regional nationalist movements gained prominence throughout India, an independent Bengal and a federated Usmanistan became possible and garnered popular support. In order to prevent Pakistan from having to compete for Muslim support with two other Muslim independence movements, Jinnah co-opted both movements into the Pakistan movement, including Bengal within Pakistan's borders and cutting deals with the princely states to ensure they would accede to Pakistan in return for the retention some degree of monarchical rule. Islamic nationalism was the key to preventing dissent. Islamic nationalist ideals emphasised unity of the Muslim polity in order to achieve religious goals, and popularised the idea of a Muslim state amongst Muslims at all levels of society. The use of such an ideology encouraged expansive borders, in order to better

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116 Ibid, 299.

117 The mooted federation was known as Usmanistan, after the Nizam of Hyderabad, Usman Ali Khan Siddiqi, although it never came to fruition as India integrated into India through either force or diplomacy the princely states on the Indian side of the border.


118 Copland states that “the League had no desire to sweep away the whole monarchical system. Indeed, like the British, it saw the princes as a valuable counterweight to the socialist tendencies of the Congress.” Ibid: 45.
incorporate as many Indian Muslims as possible within Pakistan. Such expansion can be seen in the League’s proposed border through Bengal, which incorporated areas that had neither Muslim-majority populations nor links to India’s Islamic past.

Jinnah linked the Two Nation ideology to an ideology of racial difference from India’s Hindu majority, exemplifying the Muslim warrior-tribesmen of the mountainous North West with their supposedly purer version of Islam and their racial links to Arabs, Persians and Alexander the Great’s army. Such an ideology ignored Bengal, the homeland of most of Pakistan’s future citizens, and neither mountainous or with racial links to Alexander the Great. Popular Indian stereotypes of Bengalis as weak and effeminate meant that the League’s rhetoric of territorial nationalism, in which Muslim links to the areas that would form Pakistan determined their right to it, rarely mentioned Bengal. The relatively conservative division of Punjab suggested by the League is surprising given the focus on the North-West, as there was little attempt to claim much beyond the geographically-contiguous Muslim-majority areas. The conservatism of the League’s Punjab boundary demonstrated the limits of creating a nationalism that was primarily designed to appeal to India’s Muslim population, as the League knew that it could not gain the necessary support of the British or Indian religious minorities in the area to succeed in more audacious claims for some of the most important cities and most fertile agricultural land in Northern India. Increased Bengali nationalism, in which Bengalis wanted an independent state, resulted in the League’s demands in Bengal including areas that contained only very small Muslim minorities such as Darjeeling and the Lushai Hills. In their proposal for a large Bengal that incorporated both Hindu-majority, Muslim-majority and tribal areas, the League offered an option to Bengali nationalists in which their state’s territorial integrity would remain largely preserved, thereby encouraging Bengal’s non-Muslim nationalists to support Pakistan.

Claims by senior League leaders such as Mian Mumtaz Daultana, General Secretary
of the Punjab's Muslim League, that the history of Muslim rule in India gave the League "more reason [to] claim the whole of India than yield a part to the Sikhs,"\textsuperscript{119} demonstrated the link between Islamic history and Muslim nationalism in the League's demands for Pakistan. The Mughals ruled India for over four centuries,\textsuperscript{120} thus providing Indians with a shared understanding of India's Islamic past. Although Mughal decadence was abhorred in both Muslim and Islamic nationalism as an example of religious corruption that then seeped throughout society, the League used Indian Muslims' move away from the first Mughals' Islamic purity to explain the disadvantages faced by Muslims, with the implication that the disadvantages would vanish once such rule returned.\textsuperscript{121} In this vein, fifty-thousand Muslims gathered in Delhi to demand the inclusion of Delhi province within Pakistan, as "Every inch of Delhi is sacred to Muslims and the Muslims shall see that they alone rule it as part of Pakistan."\textsuperscript{122} If the Sikhs' insistence that Lyallpur (now Faisalabad, Pakistan) belonged to their community based upon its cultural heritage, then the Muslim League could have extended Pakistan's boundaries far beyond Amritsar and across much of Northern India, based upon the region's Mughal heritage, visible in its languages, cuisines and architecture.

The League soon realised that in order to achieve the realisation of the Pakistan goal, they would have to appeal to more than just India's Muslim community as they did not have the numerical, financial or political support necessary for success. Although the Two Nation ideology initially referred to Muslims in India, its explicit message of Hindu domination came to refer to upper-caste Hindu domination thus drawing in support from India's religious minorities and lower-caste Hindus. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was much support for Pakistan amongst those who felt disenfranchised under the current system of rule,

\textsuperscript{120} The British exiled the final Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, to Burma following his role in the abortive Indian Mutiny of 1857.
\textsuperscript{121} Binder, "Theory," 385.
and by those who believed that an independent India would cement high-caste Hindu rule, thereby disadvantaging all others. The League, therefore, had to shift its focus from Islamic nationalism and its construction of a community based in common religious values to one that openly sought the support of peoples otherwise considered infidels. Islamic nationalism does not recognise the legitimacy of religions that are not Islam, Christianity or Judaism, the adherents of these religions known as ahl-ul-qitaab (People of the Book). Non-believers are taxed at a higher rate, known as jizya, which was last in operation in India during the intolerant rule of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in the late seventeenth century. Despite such discrimination, certain other aspects of Islamic nationalism, such as its refutation of political and ethnic boundaries, allowed for broader appeal amongst non-Muslims, further expanding the possible borders beyond the Muslim-majority states.

In order to prevent the partition of Punjab on disadvantageous terms for Pakistan, the League appealed to the province's Sikh population. The League's first goal was to get Sikh leaders, such as the avowedly nationalist Master Tara Singh, to agree to the 3rd June Plan, which they did, and then to appeal to them to lobby for inclusion within Pakistan rather than India, in order to increase Pakistan's size through the incorporation of areas that could otherwise be disputed in East Punjab. An editorial in Dawn, the unofficial mouthpiece of the League, pleaded with the Sikhs to "stick on with the Muslims," to maintain Punjab's unity under Pakistani control, culminating in "Muslims and Sikhs can together add to the glory of Pakistan." An alliance between the League and the Sikhs shows the triumph of nationalist demands over religious difference. Prior to the alliance, the League promoted an Islamic nationalism predicated in religious difference, alienating many Indians both Muslim and non-Muslim. The move away from such an interpretation heralded a new understanding of the

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border. The League's claims could, with Sikh backing, incorporate Sikh holy sites such as Amritsar and Nankana Sahib, and the profitable agricultural belt between the Chenab and Sutlej Rivers that the Sikhs considered to be the heart of their homeland. In gaining support from non-Muslims, the border became more certain, as the Sikhs' territorial demands were more explicit than those of the League. Despite the collapse of the alliance, the League maintained the claims to the Sikh holy towns and heartland.

The move to incorporate non-Muslims within the pro-Pakistan ideology meant that the nationalism mutated from its origins as Islamic nationalism, to its second imagining as Muslim nationalism, to become Pakistani nationalism. In this incarnation, the nationalism ignored religion and appealed to non-Muslims, de-emphasising the Islamic characteristics that originally underpinned the League's vision of Pakistan. The more secular vision was better in-line with Jinnah's own beliefs, as well as the beliefs of the small Muslim upper-class who formed the League's leadership and most politically-influential support base, and also allowed for the inclusion of Muslims from the "heretical" Ahmadiyya community and non-Muslims in leadership positions. Furthermore, although the brief alliance with the Sikh Shiromani Akali Dal gave West Pakistan more definition than previously, its borders remained unconstructed but its lack of definition enabled the League to promote Pakistan as a solution to all problems. As it changed to better suit a wider support base and because it was ill-defined, Pakistan was able to be held up as a solution to all problems. League members translated Bengal's class-based tensions into a classless Pakistan, in which all would be equal regardless of their ranking in the social hierarchy, and marketed it as a land of plenty during a time of famine. During a period of famine and civil unrest, Pakistan was used as an all-

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125 Jogindranath Mandal, a Scheduled Caste Hindu, was Pakistan's Law Minister from 1947-1950, and Sir Zafrullah Khan, a member of the Ahmadiyya sect, was Pakistan's first Foreign Minister. Furthermore, Bhimrao Ranji Ambedkar, a popular Dalit leader in India, was intimately involved in many of the discussions surrounding the creation of Pakistan, although he remained in India after Partition.

encompassing panacea – it would be a “peasant raj” for the poor Muslims of Bengal but would allow the educated Muslim elite of the United Provinces to retain their elite positions, it would both return to the purity of early Islam and be a secular state, it would drive the expansion of Islam and allow Muslims to remain neutral from neighbouring states. In its undefined state, Pakistan could be everything to everyone, and garnered much support across India’s linguistic, economic, religious and geographical divides. The support can be seen in the letters that Jinnah received from Indians as disparate as railway workers and Maharajas, Kashmiris and Assamese, Hindus and Anglo-Indian Christians.

The Congress Party

Conversely, while the Muslim League moved from an Islamic nationalism to a more inclusive Pakistani nationalism, the Congress Party's use of Hindu symbols and language began to indicate its shift towards a Hindu rather than Indian nationalism. While previously Congress had vociferously supported and led campaigns for Muslim concerns, such as the Khilafat movement, the demand for Pakistan appeared to force it in the other direction, attracting support from Hindu nationalist parties such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the quasi-fascist, Hindu nationalist, political militias from which Mohandas Gandhi’s assassin would come. The shift towards a more extremist ideology can be seen in the Congress' alliance with the Hindu Mahasabha in their joint submission of a proposed border for Bengal to the Bengal Boundary Commission, in their claim in Punjab that included many Muslim-majority areas, and in the provocation of Hindu nationalist forces in both provinces that resulted in communal violence against the Bengali and Punjabi Muslim communities.

The Congress case before the Punjab Boundary Commission was, according to

Raghuvendra Tanwar, "perceived less as a representation of a major political party and more as one representing the Hindus of Punjab," with the Hindu Mahasabha releasing a statement in support of the Congress claim. As a result of the growing convergence between the goals of Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, the *Civil and Military Gazette* stated in an editorial that "there has been so close a resemblance between the policies advocated by both [Congress and the Mahasabha] that it led observers to believe that Hindu Mahasabha was only a mirror of Congress,"128 and Congress' developing allegiance with the Hindu nationalist parties signalled their shift away from a secular nationalist ideology to one grounded in and extolling Hindu communalism. This shift would have a direct influence on their claim on the Punjab border, as it manifested itself in an unwillingness to compromise in their pursuit of *Akhand Bharat*.

Congress also allied itself with the Sikh nationalist leader Master Tara Singh and the Shiromani Akali Dal political party/militia, fusing Sikh and Hindu nationalism into a single ideology that promoted a Greater India united at any cost. In this alliance, the Sikhs held the upper-hand, as their holy sites and desire for preserving the unity of the Sikh community legitimised Congress' extension of the border into Lyallpur and Sheikhupura,129 far beyond the Hindu-majority areas of East Punjab. MC Setalwad, the Congress' lawyer at the Punjab Boundary Commission's hearings, used examples of anti-Sikh communal violence in Rawalpindi to explain that, as the Sikhs would be in danger within Pakistan's borders, the joint Congress-Sikh claims must be recognised.130 These statements cemented the relationship between Congress – the party that had always vaunted its secular vision for India,
and the Sikhs — whose leaders, especially Master Tara Singh,\textsuperscript{131} were mired in communalism.

An escalation in religio-nationalist communalism occurred once the Sikh leadership realised that their dream of Khalistan, a Sikh homeland in Punjab, could not practicably be achieved. This realisation prompted an alliance with Congress in order to force a border designed to disadvantage Pakistan and create a Sikh-majority area within Indian Punjab.\textsuperscript{132}

Although these struggles appeared purely religious, there was a strong nationalist element to them as each side sought to define their nation’s borders and acted upon the ideologies promoted by the political parties. The borders were expressions of the League and Congress' nationalist foundations, promoting two distinct national identities through the lines drawn on Radcliffe’s map.

The Congress-Sikh alliance attempted to stifle Pakistan at birth by denying it access to Punjab’s most fertile lands and modern irrigation systems. Had the Commission imposed the Congress’ border, Pakistan would not have been able to support itself financially or feed its people only a year after a devastating famine in Bengal. The influence of vindictive nationalism is apparent in the borders submitted to the Boundary Commission. Congress’ border extends far beyond the reaches of the non-Muslim majority, including within India areas that have a Muslim majority of over sixty-percent and no areas that are contiguous to Hindu-majority areas.

The attempted inclusion of the Sikh holy site of Nankana Sahib, which was far within

\textsuperscript{131} Unconnected statements by a Sikh soldier in the Indian National Army and a clerk in the Lahore Secretariat indicted Master Tara Singh for planning to blow up river headworks as well as an unspecified number of “Pakistan Special” trains containing Muslim officials travelling from India to Pakistan. Although there was no evidence to prove these allegations, there was evidence that Singh was amassing arms collected through Sikh army officers and the Raja of Faridkot. Jenkins refused to arrest Singh on these charges, as he feared such an action would “almost certainly lead to a sharp reaction among the Sikhs and would jeopardise what hopes there are that the Sikhs in West Punjab will accept the award and settle down quietly.” Only on the eve of Partition did Singh appeal to his fellow Sikhs “to desist from violence.”


the Muslim-majority areas, demonstrates the influence held by the Sikhs over Congress. In order to secure the site for India, the Sikhs and Congress organised a *diwan* (gathering) to demand that Britain include the site within East Punjab or face violence. While such gatherings were ostensibly Sikh nationalist in character, Hindu Congress leaders spoke at them to gain Sikh support for their cause in Punjab. Congress could not refuse Sikh demands or risk losing a strategic ally. The list of demands expressed by Giani Kartar Singh, a prominent and relatively moderate Sikh leader, at a meeting with Evan Jenkins was incorporated into the Congress' plan for the Pakistan border. Singh wanted a canal system, Nankana Sahib and two-thirds of Punjab's Sikh population to be included within India's borders, Congress satisfied all of these demands in the border they proposed to the Punjab Boundary Commission.

Congress, in its struggle against the British for an independent India, had long claimed that it represented all Indians. Its shift towards Hindu-Sikh nationalism, however, acknowledged their tactical use of the Hindu and Sikh middle-class and peasantry as foot-soldiers in the fight against the creation of Pakistan. The Congress leadership's recognition of the League's Two Nation ideology did not extend to its grassroots support. Communal violence, spurred on by the tacit and sometimes explicit approval of the party's leadership tapped into the fear of domination by those of a different, and supposedly hostile, religion.

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134 There is little documentary evidence from the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh leaders regarding their incitement of communal violence, but much evidence originating from British Army officers and members of the Indian Civil Service. Evan Jenkins, Governor of the Punjab, states in a letter to Mountbatten that "When a Hindu leader talks about 'utter ruthlessness' or 'martial law,' he means that wants as many Muslims as possible shot out of hand"...there is very little doubt that the disturbances have in some degree been organised and paid for by persons or bodies directly or indirectly under the control of the Muslim League, the Congress, and the Akali party."

**Bengal and Punjab**

Both Congress and the League, as well as their affiliated militias and supporting groups, treated the ideas of Pakistan and India differently in Bengal and Punjab, leading to localised nationalisms. Punjab's importance to both parties meant that there was much concern about its future, and about how it would be figured within the larger Partition narrative. There was little similar concern for Bengal, possibly because it had already been partitioned between Hindus and Muslims once before, and possibly because the stereotypes of Bengalis were not conducive to the aims of either Pakistani or Indian nationalism. The position of Punjab as the central focus of Pakistan resulted in Muslim nationalism largely being constructed around the purported characteristics of Punjabis that the League translated into characteristics of Pakistan, such as strength and modernity.

Whereas the Congress and League focused much of their political attention on Punjab, there was little focus by either party on Bengal throughout 1947. Although Suhrawardy remained in close contact with Jinnah, writing to him regularly and travelling to and from Delhi, the League leadership avoided going to Bengal, concentrating its efforts on the fight in Punjab instead. In Mountbatten's 11 July 1947 Personal Report, he wrote “The Muslim League High Command themselves take a good deal less interest in East Bengal than in Western Pakistan and I am afraid East Bengal is at the bottom of the priority list.”[^135] The League's tactical removal from Bengal probably spared it the nationalist violence prevalent in Punjab. In not acknowledging Bengal's role in shaping Pakistan, the League unthinkingly created and strengthened the case for an independent Bengal, spurring on a Bengali nationalism that focused on the differences in language and culture that the League refused to recognise. Rather than being centred on religion, this nationalism was centred on the

common experiences of all Bengalis, but it would take another quarter of a century for Bangladesh to be created.

Much more so than in Bengal, the nationalist movements in Punjab were centred on religion and its role in the creation of the border. In Bengal, issues such as class were more prominent in discussions on Bengal's future, despite the province-wide collective memory of the mass communal violence of Direct Action Day in 1946. In Punjab, nationalism was inextricably linked with religious violence: both pro- and anti-Pakistan Punjabis enacted their religious differences through massacres and arson attacks, while the Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick Burrows, stated to Mountbatten that "large-scale disturbances were not anticipated in East Bengal" and that there were sufficient troops in the region to deal with any violence at a time when the British and Indian armies in Punjab were scrambling for men who would not be turned by communal loyalties, and often coming up short. Similarly, while ethno-religious nationalism played an important role in defining Punjab's border between the Muslim and Hindu "races" as defined by the League, there was no parallel movement in Bengal, no doubt the result of its relative ethnic homogeneity, and with the key "racial" differences being between the hill tribes and the Bengalis from the low-lying Ganges delta. Neither of the parties emphasised their nationalist agendas in Bengal. As a result, the Bengal border was not constructed quite so absolutely down religious lines as in Punjab, resulting in the tit-for-tat awarding of Muslim-majority Murshidabad to India while neighbouring Hindu-majority Khulna went to Pakistan.

**Conclusion**

Without a doubt, nationalism played a part in the formation of the Punjab border due

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to its intimate connection to religion despite League attempts to create a Pakistani nationalism rather than overtly Islamic or Muslim nationalism. In Bengal, however, the situation was different, as the absence of widespread, mass and continuing communal violence somewhat separated nationalist claims for the border from religious justifications for Pakistan. Furthermore, the attempts by dissenting members of both the League and Congress, such as the League's Suhrawardy and Maulana Kalam Azad from Congress, to spearhead a Bengali nationalist movement resulted in a border that was more influenced by policies emanating from what would become West Pakistan than from within the province itself.
The changing nationalism of both the League and Congress reflected and were responses to domestic events and pressures, although support for both parties came from across the globe. As discussed in the previous chapter, the League and Congress had to react to the changing whims of both Britain and the Indian public, forcing them to change their founding ideologies in the pursuit of larger support bases. Each of the actors faced a myriad of regional, national and international pressures, especially as the Cold War began in earnest following the end of the Second World War, and sparking renewed international interest in Indian affairs.

Britain

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Britain faced domestic and international pressures to decolonize. The Labour government, elected in 1945, believed that the growing popularity of local and national independence movements throughout the Empire meant that Britain needed to divest itself of its remaining colonies. Labour's long-standing alliance with the Congress Party\textsuperscript{137} put the Labour government in the position of being able to put into effect the democratic changes in India for which they had long campaigned. To shy away from the decolonisation of India would have been impractical and short-sighted; in a time of spiralling national debt and growing social, economic and political discontent in India, the British had too much to gain from ridding itself of the tarnished “Jewel in the Crown.”

During the nineteen-forties, the United States, Britain's much-needed ally in the War, began to agitate for Britain to grant its colonies their independence. Members of the British government from both the Labour and Conservative parties began to make statements to the

effect that "the aim of His Majesty's Government policy is that Indians should themselves mould the destiny of India free from external dictation and control,"\textsuperscript{138} signalling their intention to begin the process that would lead to deconlonisation. Indian independence was "a matter in which the very greatest interest is taken in the United States,"\textsuperscript{139} and although the beginnings of the decolonisation process, especially the committee led by Sir Stafford Cripps, proved popular with the US government and public,\textsuperscript{140} more concrete and long-lasting efforts were needed. During the War, Britain could postpone the return of rule to Indian hands, but once the war was won and a new government elected, the pressure mounted\textsuperscript{141} as the United States assumed a bigger role in world politics, and was loath to support an empire.

The British government was also in debt to India as a result of the War, making a handover of power more attractive. Britain, struggled with its fall from superpower-status to debtor, while the new superpowers of the US and the USSR agitated for decolonisation. In order to receive Marshall Aid to prevent a national financial crisis, the British government announced a viable plan for Indian independence on 20 February 1947. Other factors, such as the need to maintain order in the face of civil unrest in India, and the fear of Soviet exploitation of the communal antagonism to gain a nation-wide political presence in the subcontinent, grew in importance during the two years that elapsed between the end of the War and the first statements by the British government that cemented their approval of Indian independence. Lord Pethick-Lawrence's announcement of the move towards Indian independence portrays the British government's need to maintain an air of control in the face of international pressure and absolving the British government of blame: "When the British withdraw it will be [Indians'] fault, and not ours, if no authority has been set up, adequately

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid: 710-711.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
supported, to take charge; and if India passes through confusion and turmoil into civil war it will be useless for them to blame [us].”

As a result of these pressures, Pethick-Lawrence, the British Secretary of State for India and Burma, stated that the government would “take the necessary steps to effect the transference of power into responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948,” defining the new British policy’s timeline for the return of power to Indian control. Despite the long fight for Indian independence being well underway, some Indians involved in the struggle believed that the timeline was not sufficient for the achievement of an independence that would be beneficial to all Indians. Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, head of the Muslim League in Bengal and an important figure in the Pakistani nationalist narrative despite his later support of Bengali independence from West Pakistan, declared that he doubted “if the provinces [that would form Pakistan] will be sufficiently organised by June 1948 to be able to stand on their own legs as an independent entity.” Similar dissent is seen in the Houses of Parliament where members and Lords protested that the timeframe did not give enough time to secure protection for minorities, thereby imperilling the subcontinent’s future peace and prosperity.

*Full Speed Ahead*

Upon the arrival of the new Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, in India, the timeframe was shortened from the handover occurring in June 1948 to taking place on 15 August 1947. The reduction in time was the result of political pressure by the United States, from the British public and Parliament, and from the leaders of Congress, the League and smaller

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Indian political parties. In addition, the dramatically escalating violence sweeping across Northern India from Bengal to Punjab sent a clear message to the British administration that the Indian public was impatient for partition and would stop at nothing to achieve independence for their desired nation. As the media disseminated reports of arson, murder, rape and looting, the violence increased, spurred on by revenge attacks. In such a climate of fear and bloodshed, Mountbatten could not delay India's independence any longer than he did. While the 15th August may have seemed an unworkably close date for the creation of two new countries, for many Indians it could not come soon enough.

As no appointments were made to the Boundary Commissions of Punjab and Bengal until July, there was a further reduction in the amount of time available for drawing the boundaries and the subsequent debates and arbitration panels. Limited to only three weeks in which to delineate the Bengal and Punjab borders, the Commissions constructed the border with little finesse, worsening the communal violence as trains and columns of refugees moved in the direction of uncertain borders. The time limit meant that no new data on religious composition could be collected, only one referenda (in the NWFP) could be held, maps of the provinces could not be made despite their necessity in the construction of the borderlines, and negotiations and compromises had to be swift. The result was a crudely constructed border that largely adhered to the religious majorities of the 1941 Census, and did not take into account support for Pakistan by non-Muslims or the shifting patterns of Bengal's rivers. Many of the disputes surrounding the border were the result of such corner-cutting, and these disputes shaped the border.

Full Speed Ahead: Determining the Majorities

As up-to-date head-counts of each religion in the disputed areas could not be taken due to time constraints, the Commissions determined the religious majorities of areas using
data from the 1941 Census, despite the population shifts that had taken place in the meantime due to increasing urbanisation and the growth of Punjab's agricultural canal colonies. The census data, while claiming to be comprehensive, did not include seasonal urban labourers, a large population in cities such as Lahore and the port of Calcutta. According to the League, the majority of the labourers employed on the Calcutta docks were Muslim, but their seasonal patterns of work meant that the census-takers often missed them as they shifted between their rural and urban homes. Hindus also disputed the figures produced by the census, claiming in propaganda posters that “Census enumerators convert non-Muslim province into Muslim province: Fictitious figures form foundation of Pakistan demand,” and that the large number of Muslim census enumerators proved that the assertion of a Muslim majority in Punjab was false. Recognising the old data as problematic, the Boundary Commissions proposed using data compiled from ration cards, although the data was disputed by the League and the pro-Pakistan press as they believed that the cards showed inflated numbers of Hindus. Similarly, the detection of double-counting thwarted plans to use revenue records, which would have privileged Punjab's wealthy, Sikh, land-owning

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146 According to a Muslim League report, of the twenty-two thousand workers in the port of Calcutta, seventeen thousand were Muslim. Although such a report can be considered biased due to its partisan authors and intended readership, its figures are more up-to-date than those of the Census, and include seasonal workers, and therefore while they will not be relied upon they will be acknowledged as an expression of Muslim majority. Raghib Ahsan to MA Jinnah, New Delhi 20 July 1947, in Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah Papers: On the Threshold of Pakistan 1 July – 25 July 1947, ed. Z.H. Zaidi (Islamabad, Pakistan: Quaid-i-Azam Papers Project, National Archives of Pakistan: 1996): 572.

147 The poster, produced by the Tribune newspaper, reverses the figures for the Muslim and non-Muslim populations of Punjab, so that when the 1941 Census stated Punjab's Muslim population was fifty-three percent, the Tribune awards this figure to the non-Muslim population. “Growth of Muslim Population in Punjab – 1881-1941,” The Tribune 19 May 1947, in Raghuvendra Tanwar, Reporting the Partition of Punjab 1947: Press, Public and Other Opinions (New Delhi, India: Manohar, 2006): 190.

148 For instance, of the 3147 census enumerators for Gujarat, 2485 were Muslim. The Tribune 15 May 1947, in Raghuvendra Tanwar, Reporting the Partition of Punjab 1947: Press, Public and Other Opinions (New Delhi, India: Manohar, 2006): 191.

As a result, the Boundary Commissions were blind – their remit to draw a boundary based upon contiguous religious-majority areas could not be fulfilled without accurate and reliable data. Due to the importance of their mission and their swiftly-approaching deadline, the Commissions used the inaccurate data, partitioning areas that had had a Muslim or non-Muslim majority six years previously.

Census data shows that Bengal had experienced a large population increase of more than twenty-percent in the previous decade, and with the trend towards urbanisation likely to result in an even higher increase between 1941 and 1951. This increase would have meant that the population of Bengal, including the disputed areas, was significantly higher than recorded during the 1941 Census. Moreover, census data show that the Muslim community was increasing at a higher rate than the Hindu community – between 1931 and 1941, there was a twenty-percent increase in Muslims in Bengal compared to a 16.1 percent increase in Hindus – making it probable that the majority of the 1941-47 population increase would have been Muslim. Bengal’s narrow religious majorities along the borderlands mean that a high Muslim birth rate could have changed the religious majority of a tehsil, village or town, altering the placement of the border.

**Full Speed Ahead: Mapping the Border**

Time restrictions meant that there was no time for the Commissions or the Survey of India to draw maps of the borderland regions or to take into account the shifting rivers that would be designated as boundaries in some tehsils and districts especially in Bengal. Indian disputes over the Bengal border resulted in the foundation of the Indo-Pakistani Boundary

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151 India Census Commission, *Bengal*, 12.

152 Ibid, 48.
Disputes Tribunal in 1949. The Indian and Pakistani governments jointly commissioned, using a British company, the first aerial survey along the boundary in January 1951, more than three years after Partition. At the same time, a hydrographic survey to determine the midstream and current of the Ganges was begun. By the September 1951, of the 890 miles of border between East Pakistan and West Bengal, only 265 miles had been reconnoitred and 104 miles finalised. Nafis Ahmad describes the difficulty in using a river such as the Ganges as a border, because of its shifting course and irregular midstream. As the river’s course moved across the Gangetic plain, Pakistan and India could both claim territory; both nations have fought over islands of mud, sand and little else. India and Pakistan differed over whether the border should be flexible or rigid, i.e.: move with the river’s course or remain static no matter the river’s placement. These disputes resulted because the time allotted to determine the borders did not allow for even cursory aerial or hydrographic surveys.

There was much support for a border based in natural boundaries. Many Indians and Britons who experienced Partition believed that the lines drawn through mixed-religion villages, down the middle of irrigation canals, and through farmers’ fields contributed to the rising tide of communalism in 1947 as Muslims and non-Muslims fought to lay claim to abandoned land or to protect their property. Sardar Baldev Singh, a Sikh nationalist member of Congress, claimed that Punjab’s natural boundaries were preferable to the creation of an artificial line that would be a “source of constant irritation” for both India and Pakistan. Of

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154 The ongoing disputes between India and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) over territory in the Ganges region was recently publicised when an island in the Bay of Bengal vanished under rising sea levels. Both nations claimed the island, known to Indians as New Moore Island and as South Talpatti Island to Bangladeshis. This incident emphasises that the boundary disputes of the nineteen-forties and nineteen-fifties did not end, and India had used both its Navy and Border Security Force to claim the island in the past. Chris Morris, “Disputed Bay of Bengal island ‘vanishes’ say scientists,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, 24 March 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8584665.stm
155 Ahmad, *Tribuna*, 331.
156 Baldev Singh to Mountbatten, New Delhi 21 July 1947, in *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Volume XII *The Mountbatten Viceroyalty, Princes, Partition and
course, from his Sikh nationalist standpoint this meant awarding India parts of the Punjab up to the Chenab River, with the Sikhs being gifted the area between the Chenab and its counterpart the Sutlej.

In the 1949-51 tribunal, the presiding judge stated that Radcliffe's drawing of the Mathabhanga, formerly a major river, "did not exist in reality." The Mathabanga had almost vanished in the few years since Partition, thus emphasising the problematic nature of using rivers as borders. The governments of India and Pakistan raised similar issues at the tribunal due to Radcliffe's inaccurate demarcation of thana boundaries and his between two rivers, both known as the Kusiyara, only one of which was intended to be used as a border. Radcliffe's lack of experience in India, politics, and the drawing of borders make some of the mistakes he made understandable, and demonstrates the flaws in the British policy of appointing a naif to a politically-sensitive position. Such mistakes prevented the creation of a workable border between India and Pakistan, and the use of rivers resulted in a border that was physically unstable. As a result, the border between West Bengal and East Pakistan remains flexible and fluid, despite its basis in supposedly rigid statistics.

_Lip-service to Local and International Pressures_

Once current events made partition necessary, the British sought to determine the extent to which the Indian public in the areas affected were in favour of the creation of Pakistan. Time constraints, however, prevented them from conducting far-ranging referenda, and instead they resorted to a referendum in the Congress-controlled NWFP, and a vote in the legislative assemblies of Bengal and Punjab. Property qualifications disqualified many...

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157 Ibid, 332.

158 Ibid, 333.

Indians, disproportionately Muslims, from voting, and a referendum in Punjab would have favoured the Hindu and Sikh landlords rather than their disenfranchised Muslim tenants.\textsuperscript{160} The votes in Bengal and Punjab's legislative assemblies can be seen as a public demonstration by the British government of their new commitment to democracy in India. Such a display was necessary in order to show the United States that Britain was committed to the decolonisation that would secure the much-needed loans. Representatives for all communities voted on whether to partition their province under the 3\textsuperscript{rd} June plans that showed a Pakistan created from India's North-Western provinces and Muslim Bengal.

The instructions to the Bengal Legislative Assembly demonstrate that, democratic as their intention may have been, the British needed a quick answer to the question of whether or not Bengal should be partitioned according to the 3\textsuperscript{rd} June plans. In dividing the legislature into two sections — Hindu-majority constituencies and Muslim-majority constituencies — the British guaranteed that a pro-Partition decision would be reached. Representatives of Hindu-majority constituencies voted overwhelmingly in favour of partitioning the province, knowing that the Hindu-majority areas outnumbered those with a Muslim majority, and so securing for India vital agricultural land, links to other provinces, and important cities such as Calcutta. The Muslim-majority constituencies voted overwhelmingly against the partitioning of Bengal, as they knew Pakistan would lose out on the most economically-important areas of the province should partition go ahead. Both the Punjab and Bengal assemblies had a Hindu majority, and as a result they approved the partitions of both provinces. The British had always expected this answer, labelled as “little more than window-dressing” by SSG author Joya Chatterji.\textsuperscript{161} Once the Bengal and Punjab legislative assemblies gave their stamp of approval to the division of their respective provinces, the British had their answer.

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provinces along religious lines, the Boundary Commissions could begin their work deciding the precise form the partition would take.

Confusion amongst members of all communities and a refusal to accept the terms of the 3rd June Plan and the Boundary Commissions' subsequent awards were key in the construction of the borders. In Punjab, Hindu and Sikh leaders refused to leave Lahore as they believed that if they did, their claim to it would be nullified and it would be lost to Pakistan forever. Consequently, they planned on basing much of India's government in the city, despite its narrow Muslim-majority. A similar refusal by the Sikhs to cede the canal colonies of Lyallpur and Montgomery was accepted by some members of the British administration, including Mountbatten's private secretary George Abell and Jenkins, but was overruled in the Boundary Commission's final line.162

**The Press**

The partisan press, which included most newspapers, magazines and pamphleteers during the Partition period, tried to influence the Boundary Commissions' decisions. Newspapers on both sides of the ideological divide published readers' pleas for inclusion within either India or Pakistan, and editorials that praised one political vision while condemning the other. The publication of readers' letters was one way in which the non-elites could claim agency, and most called for the delineation of borders along lines favourable to their particular community, with the threat of civil war if the Boundary Commissions did not heed their warning. Whether or not the publication of letters and editorials influenced the Commissions directly is immaterial, as they were also designed to be digested by the non-elites who formed the mobs that played an important role in the determination of the borders through extensive and unrelenting communal violence.

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Letters in the Pakistan Times, a pro-League paper, warned the Commission to be "ready [to face] all eventualities if decision is otherwise [to one that was pro-Pakistan]," while others warned that Muslim women were not afraid to fight an unjust award.\(^{163}\) Statements by prominent League leaders published in almost all pro-Pakistan newspapers stated that Muslims would "fight to [the] bitterest end if a single man or a single acre of land which rightfully belongs to us is kept away from us [in the Commission's decision],"\(^{164}\) broadcasting to Muslims that they should be prepared to fight, and to non-Muslims that the Commission's Punjab award would not necessarily be obeyed. A Dawn editorial echoed this statement, declaring "that every man, woman and child in Muslim Punjab will fight to the bitterest end if a single person or a single acre of land which belongs to Pakistan...is kept away."\(^{165}\) The editors of Dawn purposefully included pro-Pakistan letters from almost every town in Punjab,\(^{166}\) thereby emphasising to its readership and the Boundary Commission the rightness of Muslims' and the League's claim to all of Punjab, not just the part on the Pakistan side of the notional boundary.

The Hindu press was equally vitriolic, decrying Congress' attempts at securing peace as "pushing India back to where it was in 1750."\(^{167}\) Many Hindu papers aligned against Congress and in favour of more extremist Hindu political organisations, such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Mahasabha, that, the editors and owners believed, would end the Muslims' demand for Pakistan and bring about a United India under Hindu rule. By publishing inflammatory statements by influential leaders, which often called for the forcible re-placement of the boundary through the elimination or exile of


\(^{164}\) Leaders who signed this included Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Firoz Khan Noon amongst others. Ibid.


neighbouring Muslim communities, the papers positioned themselves as a mouthpiece for the common people, a conduit through which Pakistan could be disavowed and de-legitimised, and the borders altered.

**Personal Relationships**

Despite the transition to a Labour government after the Second World War, little altered in regards to those appointed to positions within India. The appointment of Mountbatten, whose experience with India was limited to touring it with members of the royal family in the nineteen-thirties, to the position of Viceroy exemplified a culture that privileged those with no specialist knowledge over those who had been immersed in the area, culture and people for decades. Claims of bias abounded as Mountbatten and Nehru's friendship became apparent, although little evidence was found at the time to dispute the construction of Britain as the neutral power between two communal political parties. British neutrality was important in the shaping of the border as it gave Britain the right, in the midst of the politicised and communal demands made by the Commissions' Indian judges, to make the ultimate decisions regarding the towns, villages and fields placed on either side. The British administration had designed the system to prevent the boundary from being labelled biased or illegitimate, although it was, of course, labelled as both by both parties as they fought over areas allocated to the other nation to which they believed they had a right due to religious, cultural or economic factors.

O.H.K Spate, an academic geographer appointed by the Ahmadiyya community to argue for the inclusion of their city, Qadian, in Pakistan, wrote in his diary that one of the Punjab Boundary Commission's Muslim judges, Justice Din Mohammad, had been “offered a

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bribe of Rs. 2,500,000 (obviously by India). That he did not publish the accusation casts some doubt on its veracity, but it would not be unreasonable to presume that there was some degree of corruption or attempted corruption involved in the drawing of a border that would determine the fate of two nations. Certainly both sides' pandering to the monarchs of the princely states demonstrates the degree to which the Congress and League leaderships were willing to compromise their principles of equality and democracy in return for the accession of Patiala or Bahawalpur to India or Pakistan.

The most controversial decisions were those that ceded Muslim-majority Murshidabad to India while awarding Hindu-majority Khulna to Pakistan, and a series of decisions in Punjab that resulted in the Muslim-majority Gurdaspur being included on the Indian side of the Radcliffe line in order to give India a link to the independent princely states of Jammu and Kashmir, the ownership of which was also disputed. For the Muslim League, the blow of losing Gurdaspur was felt more keenly when Muslim-majority Ferozepur was included within India, despite earlier maps which had positioned it within Pakistan. No attempt was made to explain the decision to include within India two Muslim-majority border districts that were contiguous to other Muslim-majority areas. The Muslim League leadership determined that such changes were the result of pro-Indian bias, but such accusations came to naught and the border remained as Radcliffe had drawn it, much to the League's dissatisfaction.

In 1989, Radcliffe's private secretary, Christopher Beaumont, wrote a statement that showed Congress' influence on British decisions in Punjab. The Commission's initial line put Ferozepur in Pakistan, but after meetings with VP Menon and Lord Ismay, Mountbatten's

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private secretary, Radcliffe changed the line. This change only came to light because Sir Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab, did not destroy his correspondence and it subsequently fell into Pakistani hands. The British and Indian administrations ignored Pakistani claims that the line had been deliberately altered, despite evidence that Indian political figures had convinced British boundary officials to change it in their favour.

Primary evidence clearly demonstrates that the British officials in charge of shaping the Indo-Pakistani border and partitioning British India were biased in favour of the Congress vision of India, although often with reservations. Both parties allege British bias in favour of the opposition, but there is little evidence to suggest that Mountbatten and the British administration favoured the case for Pakistan over that of India. Ali Yavar Jung, a diplomat and League supporter, stated that he knew “in his heart of hearts the Viceroy is not in favour of Pakistan and is (as completely as possible) under the influence of Congress,” and such sentiments were common amongst Jinnah’s Muslim correspondents whether members of the public or of the League. Such conviction in an unfairly-constructed border is a common theme in Pakistani historiography, and is often combined with the fear that India will lay claim to Pakistani territory in the future, a fear that resurfaces during conflicts over Kashmir.

**Conclusion**

The political climate of the time demanded expediency at home where the British government was facing a mounting debt crisis, in India where communal violence was escalating beyond the authorities' ability to maintain control, and on the international stage where the United States pressured for decolonisation. The rapid accumulation of such

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pressures forced the British government to progress faster than originally intended in the process to return India to Indian rule. Although many deemed the first timeline of eighteen months as too short due to the sheer amount of work necessary to ensure a peaceful and successful handover, had the British waited any longer than the six months between the announcement in February and independence in August they would not have been able to maintain the illusion of control they needed to assuage the Indians, the Americans, and the voters at home. The result of such expediency was a hurriedly-constructed border that took little into account other than economic concerns and out-of-date and unreliable statistics on residents' religious affiliations.

174 Even Jinnah believed that the timeline was too short, and asked if it could be delayed. Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, 252.
V. Conclusion

Despite the insistences of the prevailing nationalist historiographies, religious factors were not the primary determinant of either the Bengal or the Punjab borders. Maps of both provinces show irregularities in their partitions; the award of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Khulna to Pakistan when neither had a Muslim majority, or the placement of Muslim-majority Gurdaspur within India. These irregularities conflict with the school of thought that places religion at the centre of the border’s formation, as they demonstrate that the Commissions awarded some of the most important and contentious areas along the border to a nation professing a different religion from the majority of the district’s inhabitants. Furthermore, the award of these areas cannot be solely explained using the “other factors” clause of the Commissions’ remits. Under this corollary, the Bengal Boundary Commission should have awarded the Lushai Hills to Pakistan, due to its similarities with the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The award of Khulna to Pakistan and Murshidabad to India is equally problematic, as both districts were similarly under-resourced and over-populated.

As examined in the second chapter, religion was important in determining the border, but its importance derives from the way in which it influenced the nationalisms of the Muslim League and the Congress Party. Religion serves as a catalyst for many of Partition’s events, providing the spark for communal riots and demands on holy sites far within the opposing party’s borders. Furthermore, it provided the impetus for the formation of the League and the demand for Pakistan. Although religion provided the reason for the border’s formation, it did not determine its form.

Instead, the primary determinant of the border was the pace at which it was constructed. A longer period of time allowed for the border’s formation would have resulted in a more nuanced line that better reflected the will of the Indian public and their leaders.
Rather than the crude and out-of-date census figures that the Commissions used to determine the majority populations of Bengal and Punjab's borderland districts, the British administration in conjunction with the League and Congress could have undertaken surveys and referenda of the local populations to better reflect support for Pakistan amongst non-Muslim groups. The lack of time resulted in a border determined by personal connections, fear of violence, and international pressures. It did not reflect the religious compositions of many areas, nor did it satisfy the demands of the various religious communities active in the partition process. The Sikhs, for instance, demanded the inclusion of Nankana Sahib within India, yet it remained in Pakistan. Similarly, the Ahmadiyya sect wanted Qadian to be included within Pakistan, yet it remained in India. Neither Nankana Sahib nor Qadian were far from the borderline, but the Punjab Boundary Commission awarded neither to their nation of choice, in spite of threats of violence should the respective communities deem the awards unsatisfactory.

Both the League and Congress used religion to define their demands, and both proved to be flexible when working with other religious communities, as seen in Congress' demand for land up to the River Chenab in order to secure a homeland for their new Sikh allies. The Commissions rejected many demands based in religious factors, and the Sikh homeland, Khalistan, could not be realised. Similarly, the Commission rejected Muslim demands for the inclusion of Delhi within West Pakistan. Had the Commission based its decisions primarily in religious factors, it would have approved both of these demands, as neither would have changed the shape of the border too contentiously.

The Commissions accepted demands based in economic need, rather than in religion. Rather than award Sikhs the districts of Lyallpur and Montgomery based upon religious and cultural factors, these areas went to Pakistan based upon their viability for commercial agriculture and industry. A further example of the Commissions making decisions based
upon a nation’s need is seen in Bengal, where they denied Pakistan Calcutta, but offered river access to Chittagong Port through the Tracts in return.

The historiographies of India and Pakistan privilege religion, rather than political and economic realities, as a factor in the creation of their nations because it provides a unifying narrative of difference and opposition. In Pakistan’s case, this narrative emphasises Hindu oppression of Muslims, laying the groundwork for the Two Nation theory and the creation of Pakistan. Without religion, the Muslim League could not have demanded Pakistan, and its initial claims on British India’s North-West and North-East are clearly grounded in religious majorities. These claims evolved, however, to incorporate Bengali nationalists and pious Punjabis, and in doing so the League abandoned its rhetoric of religious claims on territory. The Congress Party’s shift from secular to religious claims on the land demonstrates its acknowledgement of the burgeoning religious fundamentalism in Punjab and Bengal. This acknowledgement was necessary as it allowed Congress to appeal to the Sikhs and to discourage lower-caste Hindus from siding with the League. However, even with this shift in ideology, Congress’ most important gains sprang not from territorial claims grounded in religion but from those grounded in economic factors, as discussed above.

With the parties’ mutating nationalisms changing their support base, the British could not rely solely on religious factors to determine which areas supported which nation, and they had no time to conduct referenda. As a result, they made rash decisions, not helped by Mountbatten and Radcliffe’s ignorance about India and close friendships with high-placed members of the Congress Party. The Houses of Parliament had debated India’s independence for many years, and yet the British administration only set up the institutions that would allow for a handover of power in the few weeks before the 15th August. As India writhed with communal violence, the British took snap decisions to stall the brutality and calm the populace. These decisions, taken without proper guidance or with up-to-date information,
resulted in six decades of anger, suspicion and war. National narratives built upon the
importance of religion in the birth of India and Pakistan left little room for compromise, as
conflicts over the border have demonstrated. Pakistan depicts India as aggressive and
oppressive, with itself as the champion of India’s oppressed. India, on the other hand, paints
itself as a secular paradise in comparison to the theocracy over the border. Until the false
premise that religion determined the border between India and Pakistan is exploded, neither
side can compromise with the other.
VI. Illustrations

VII. Bibliography.

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